

Tottenham beats Nottingham Forest 2-1

WEMBLEY, England (AP) — An own goal in overtime by England defender Des Walker handed Tottenham a record eighth Football Association Cup soccer triumph Saturday in a 2-1 victory over Nottingham Forest. In a see-sawing game before 30,000 fans at Wembley, Tottenham midfielder Paul Gascoigne was carried off on a stretcher. Colleague Gary Lineker missed a penalty and another England star, Forest captain Stuart Pearce, rifled home a free kick. Paul Steward levelled for Tottenham after half time and the game was three minutes into overtime when Walker headed the ball into his own net for the winner. It was a thrilling final, watched from the stands by Prince Charles and Princess Diana and on TV by an estimated 600 million people in 100 countries. Tottenham's triumph put the North London team into next season's European Cup winners Cup at a time when the club is in turmoil over its ownership. Manager Terry Venables is trying to buy a club that reportedly is \$35 million in debt and faced with selling its best players. Defeat for Forest meant that its manager, Brian Clough, still has not won the trophy despite guiding the club to a league championship, two European Champions Cup triumphs and the domestic League Cup four times.

Jordan Times

An Independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الراي.

Volume 16 Number 4703

AMMAN SUNDAY, MAY 19, 1991, THAL QU'DEH 5, 1411

Price: Jordan 100 fils; Saudi Arabia 1.50 riyals; UAE 1.50 dirhams

Ben Ali denounces coup plot

TUNIS (R) — Tunisian President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali denounced on Saturday a plan to topple the government, and the official press said security forces had foiled a plot by Muslim fundamentalists to seize power. Ben Ali, in a televised address to officials of the ruling Democratic Constitutional Union party, accused unnamed forces of being at work to infiltrate and cripple state institutions. "The real targets are republican institutions and the form of the state itself," he said. The official daily La Presse said security forces had foiled a plot by the outlawed Nahdha fundamentalist movement to take power next October. Ben Ali described the fundamentalists' allies as political failures. Political sources said he was referring to exiled former Prime Minister Mohamed M'zali and former Planning Minister Ahmed Ben Salah. They recently joined Nahdha's leader Rached Ghannouchi to accuse the government of dragging Tunisia into violence through repression and terror.

Egyptian president arrives in Turkey

ANKARA (R) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak arrived in Turkey Saturday on a one-day visit for talks on regional issues and bilateral relations, the semi-official Anatolian news agency said. Mr. Mubarak was greeted at Ankara's Esenboga airport by Turkish President Turgut Ozal, Prime Minister Yildirim Akbulut and other officials. The Egyptian leader leaves Sunday for Syria and Libya. He has just completed a tour of Italy, Luxembourg, Belgium and France in which he sought a reduction in Egypt's foreign debt and prospects for a Middle East peace conference.

Turkish police holds 5 at Kurdish rally

ISTANBUL (AP) — Police on Saturday detained five leftist protesters during an illegal demonstration in memory of four Kurdish activists who died in prison eight years ago. About 200 members of the banned Kurdistan Workers' Party gathered at Beyazit Square in downtown Istanbul, carrying banners and photographs of the dead prisoners. The party has been waging a separatist war since 1984. The demonstrators shouted slogans in support of an independent Kurdistan state in southeastern Turkey and set fire to two municipal vehicles before the police arrived.

Sharif names first woman on his cabinet

ISLAMABAD (R) — Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif Saturday named a firebrand woman politician, Abida Hussain, to be his adviser on population planning. A statement said she would have the status of a minister, thus becoming the first woman member of Mr. Sharif's six-month-old cabinet. Her husband, Fakhar Imam, is education minister. The appointment of Abida Hussain, who comes from the minority Shiite Muslim sect, was announced only two days after the parliament's lower house passed a controversial Islamic law criticised by woman groups as a curtailment of their rights.

Ethioplarebels say they control key road

NAIROBI (R) — Rebels battling the Ethiopian government say they have taken control of part of a key road from the Red Sea port of Asab in fighting ahead of peace talks later this month. A spokesman for the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), commenting on rebel radio reports, said Saturday that over the last two days the rebels had seized control of the road from Asab, the only Ethiopian port in government hands, at the town of Mile in southern Wollo. Rebels now controlled the land route from Asab both to the capital Addis Ababa and to the northern town of Dessie, spokesman Asefa Mamo told Reuters by telephone from London.

King returns home after talks with Assad, says both sides seeking joint Arab position

Jordan and Syria coordinating stands

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein said Saturday that Jordan was coordinating its position with that of Syria and the two countries were working towards crystallising a joint Arab stand. In a statement to Jordan Television shortly after returning from a day-long visit to Damascus where he discussed with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad the Middle East question and Jordanian-Syrian relations as well as Arab affairs, the King described the outcome of the visit as good and positive. In reply to a question about the situation in the Middle East following the recent tour of the area by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, the King said: "I believe that the discussions are continuing and it seems to me that there is a real resolve to find a solution to the most important and central issue — that is the Palestine problem."

"I cannot go into details at the moment but I believe that there is an intention on the part of all concerned to avoid going into details at present because giving details now could create difficulties and place obstacles in the path of the peace process. "I believe the world community is now concerned about a solution for the Palestine problem, something we have been calling for. "A solution of the Palestine problem is an Arab demand, which is now being met with a favourable response on the part of the world community. We are still at the initial stages which seem to be encouraging and we hope to be able to do our duty — as it is a serious duty — towards our brethren in the occupied Arab territories who are undergoing suffering. "The time has come for us to shoulder our responsibilities to-

wards our people in the present and the future so that the coming generations can live in peace and security. "Accompanying King Hussein on the visit were Prime Minister Mudar Badran, Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, the King's Political Advisor Adnan Abu Odeh, the King's Military Secretary His Royal Highness Prince Talal Ben Mohammad and Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri. King Hussein, on his second visit to Damascus since the Gulf war, went straight into discussions with President Assad after arriving in Damascus from Amman. The outcome of regional tours by Mr. Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh to push for an Arab-Israeli peace conference was believed to

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Shamir reaffirms rejection of U.N. role in peace talks

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Hard-line Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir Saturday showed no signs of softening on key points of disagreement with Arab states over a proposed peace conference. Speaking in an interview 48 hours after his fourth round of talks with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, Mr. Shamir once again ruled out any role for the U.N. in proposed peace talks. "We said (to Mr. Baker) the state of Israel has a terrible history with the United Nations and everyone in Israel who wants to protect himself should distance himself from it," Mr. Shamir told Israel Radio. Mr. Shamir said he and Mr. Baker discussed a one-time meeting in Washington sponsored by the American and Soviet presidents to which Arab and Israeli heads of state would be invited. "We are not talking about a conference that needs to continue or not continue... as a result of this meeting direct negotiations between Israel and its neighbours will start," Mr. Shamir said. "For this reason, there is no place to

talk about any flexibility." Mr. Baker left Israel Thursday saying the sides were still at odds over what if any role the U.N. would play and the extent to which any peace conference would reconvene. A U.S. official said Mr. Baker had reached agreement with Israel on the sticky question of how Palestinians would be represented at the conference table, a key point which has frustrated past peace efforts. Mr. Shamir said he and Mr. Baker had reached some secret agreements, and President George Bush, after a briefing with Mr. Baker, said there was real cause for optimism. Israel insists that a one-off conference should break up into direct bilateral negotiations with individual Arab states and not reconvene. Syria demands a conference under U.N. auspices that could be periodically reconvened. "Syria has its own reasons not to come if it decides this," Mr. Shamir said. "Syria does not want to recognise Israel. Syria does not want direct negotiations with

Israel." "Syria wants as a precondition to any talks with Israel a complete withdrawal from all those areas where we were not before the (1967) war. And she has many more dreams which in our opinion will never be realised." Syria wants Israel to return the Golan Heights occupied in the 1967 war. Mr. Baker and his aides feel the U.N. issue and the question of whether the conference can be reconvened are just excuses the parties are using to avoid committing themselves. France and Egypt insisted Saturday that there was a need to involve the United Nations in a Middle East peace conference. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said after meeting French President Francois Mitterrand that any peace conference would have to discuss U.N. resolutions on the Middle East. "The U.N. is therefore entitled to participate. Those who say 'no' want to complicate things, don't want a solution," Mr. Mubarak

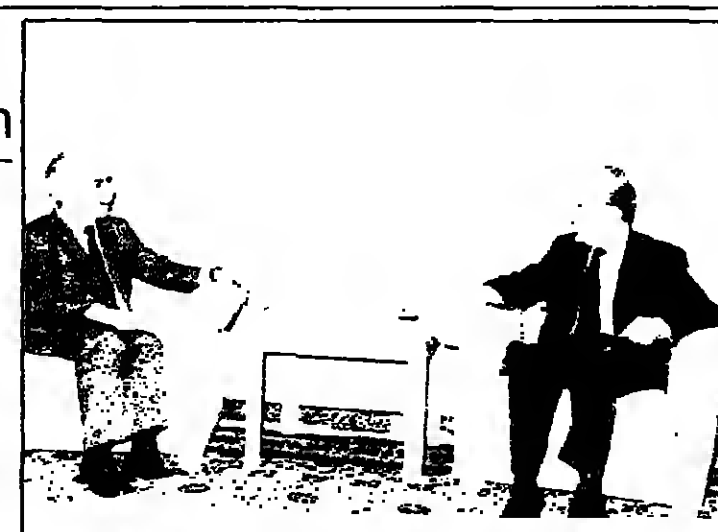
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Britain was asked to show good will in Brand case

BAGHDAD (R) — Britain ignored a Soviet suggestion more than a month ago that it make a "gesture of goodwill" towards Iraq to help win the release of spy case Briton Douglas Brand, diplomatic sources said Saturday. Mr. Brand, a 51-year-old engineer, was sentenced to life imprisonment on espionage charges this week in a case that outraged the British government. A life sentence in Iraq is a maximum 20 years. Mr. Brand's trial followed less than a week after Prime Minister John Major's pledge to keep Gulf war economic sanctions in force against Iraq as long as President Saddam Hussein holds power. "The Soviet embassy recommended a gesture of goodwill to the British side after they first visited Brand in jail about six weeks ago," one source told Reuters. "It was up to London to decide what they could do, but so far they have taken a very tough position. "If anything is to be done for him (Brand), it should be in a quiet way without tough statements," the source said. Iraq has made no comment on the case but Information Minister Hamid Yousef Hummadi accused Major of waging a "personal vendetta," against President Saddam and the Iraqi people. Mr. Brand, a former marine, came to Iraq before the Gulf crisis to work on clearing the Shatt Al Arab waterway of mines left by the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war. He was arrested in September, apparently trying to leave the country at a time when Iraq barred the departure of Westerners in hopes of deterring attack over its takeover of Kuwait.

Israeli attack kills 4, injures 6 near Tyre

TYRE, Lebanon (Agencies) — Israeli warplanes raided a Palestinian refugee camp near this southern port city on Saturday, killing at least four people and wounding six others, police said. Police spokesman said at least two planes struck the refugee camp of Shabreeha at 4:05 p.m. (1305 GMT). The camp is five kilometres northeast of Tyre. Among those injured in the raid was Ahmad Faqih, the Tyre correspondent for Reuters. Reporters in the news agency's Beirut bureau said he was slightly hurt. The raid was Israel's 10th in Lebanon this year. By police count, 11 people were killed and 67 wounded in the eight previous attacks. Saturday's raid came a day after resistance fighters detonated two roadside bombs in the Israeli-controlled "security zone" in South Lebanon. The Islamic Resistance claimed responsibility for the bombings, which killed four people and wounded four others. The injured included a member of the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia, according to an Israeli army command statement. Israel carved out the 1,100-square-kilometre "security zone" when it withdrew the bulk of its invading army from South Lebanon in 1985 after a three-year occupation. Witnesses quoted by Reuters said a one-storey barracks used by the Amal Militia was flattened in Saturday's attack. Thick black smoke billowed from the ruins. Security sources said some Amal fighters were trapped under the rubble. They said the position was Amal's main command post for planning guerrilla attacks against the "security zone."



His Majesty King Hussein with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad during a working visit he paid to Damascus Saturday (Petra photos)

Barzani: Accord reached on full democracy, autonomy

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — The Iraqi government and Kurdish guerrillas have reached "broad agreement" on full democracy for Iraq and autonomy for the Kurdish minority, rebel leaders said Saturday. Massoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), told reporters that both sides had agreed on free elections throughout Iraq, freedom of the press, political pluralism and separation of the executive, legislative and judicial bodies. But how these were to be achieved and key details of Kurdish autonomy remained unresolved. President Saddam Hussein has promised greater freedoms and a multi-party democracy to his people. Mr. Barzani, who heads the largest Kurdish rebel group, has been negotiating with the government for the past two weeks. There has been official comment from the Iraqi government, but Mr. Barzani's remarks were reported at length by the Iraqi News Agency (INA). Mr. Barzani said the deal in principle included ending the crisis in the rebellion-hit north, separation of the ruling Baath Party from the state, free elections and a multi-party system. He said a signed agreement was being delayed by continued differences over whether the oil

city of Kirkuk should be included in an autonomous Kurdish region. "After 20 years of fighting we need time to solve all our problems. I hope that it will be days but there is not limit for the time," he told a news conference attended by Iraqi Culture and Information Minister Hamid Yousef Hummadi. Mr. Barzani, leader of the powerful Kurdish Democratic Party, has had two meetings with President Saddam since his arrival in Baghdad on May 7 at the head of the rebel Iraqi Kurdistan Front alliance. "The main point which we are still negotiating is about the area of autonomy. There are different views," he said. Mr. Barzani, dressed in baggy trousers and a chequered Kurdish turban, said he was optimistic about signing an autonomy deal and would stay in Baghdad as long as was necessary. The Baghdad talks followed rebellions by Kurds in the north and Shiite Muslims in the south after the Gulf war. Government forces crushed the twin rebellions, triggering an exodus of two million Iraqis towards the Turkish and Iranian borders. It was not clear what would happen with Western troops in northern Iraq, who entered the

country to protect Kurdish refugees. "The presence of the foreigners will be solved when the Kurdish problem is solved, when we reach agreement," Mr. Barzani said. Thousands of refugees are returning from the mountains to towns north of the 36th parallel in allied-controlled northern Iraq. An autonomy agreement would pave the way for the return of the refugees to all northern villages and cities, including Kirkuk, now under Iraqi government control. Kirkuk, occupied for eight days by rebels in the unrest, has been a thorn in the side of Kurdish relations with Baghdad for decades. The city was excluded from a Kurdish autonomous region set up by Baghdad after a March 11, 1970 agreement which the rebels say was never fully implemented. Mr. Barzani confirmed that the Kurdistan Front was ready to leave control of the Kirkuk area's oil in the hands of the central government in return for Kurdish administration of the city. A quarter of Iraq's pre-war oil production of 3.2 million barrels per day came from fields around Kirkuk. "We want to reach concrete agreement on this matter, a radical solution if possible and end this

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U.N. report says more data needed on Iraqi arms

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Officials monitoring ceasefire requirements in Iraq need more information from Baghdad about biological and chemical weapons that are to be destroyed as part of the accord, according to a U.N. report. The preliminary report, which is expected to be submitted to the Security Council in the next few days, also recommends inspectors mark Iraq's chemical arms sites and stockpiles with tamper-proof seals to prevent Iraqis from moving the arsenals before they can be neutralised. A copy of the 39-page document was made available to the Associated Press. The April 3 ceasefire resolution adopted by the Security Council demands Iraq be stripped of its chemical and biological arms, short-range ballistic missiles and all nuclear weapons-grade materials and facilities. A U.N. commission has been created to oversee the destruction of Iraqi weapons and the monitoring of its compliance with council demands. The report says far more information is needed from Iraq about its biological and chemical weapons. Iraq says it has no biological arms, but the commission chairman, Rolf Ekeus of Sweden, has asked Iraq's U.N. ambassador about biological weapons research facilities, vaccines and immunisation of the armed forces. The report said the U.N. special commission on Iraqi disarmament also should seek information about undeclared chemical

U.N. to station guards in Iraq

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — The United Nations will station security guards in Kurdish areas of northern Iraq from Sunday under an agreement being negotiated with Baghdad, a senior U.N. official said. Berni Bernander, the U.N.'s special representative in Iraq, told reporters a first contingent of 10 guards arrived in the Iraqi capital Saturday. They would go to the northern town of Dohuk Sunday to establish the first U.N. security presence at a transit camp for Kurdish refugees. He said an agreement was imminent between Iraq and the office of U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar that would provide for the deployment of some 400 to 500 guards in four Iraqi provinces in the mainly Kurdish north and in the mainly Shiite southern province of Basra. Western countries have been seeking a U.N. police presence in northern Iraq to replace Western military forces now there to protect Kurdish refugees and convince them it is safe to return home. But this force stops short of what the allied countries are seeking. More than two million Kurds fled their homes when Iraqi troops put down a March rebellion. About 1.5 million entered neighbouring Iraq or Turkey. Mr. Bernander stressed that the security guards were not police forces. He said they would be authorised to carry side-arms and would be regulated by U.N. guidelines on when to use such arms. He could not give specifics on the guidelines. He described the guards as a "general law and order" presence.

Mr. Bernander said the United Nations hoped to have 50 to 60 such security guards in Iraq within 10 days. He said there was no final agreement on the number of guards to be deployed in Iraq, but he noted that Mr. Perez de Cuellar had been citing a figure of 400 to 500 U.N. security guards. He said they were being dispatched under an April 18 bilateral memorandum of understanding signed by the United Nations in Iraq with the Baghdad government providing for a humanitarian presence in the northern and southern areas to deal with the refugee crisis. Mr. Bernander said the guards were being dispatched "to create a climate of assurance and provide perhaps an additional inducement" to Kurds to return to Iraq. The security guards will be allowed to operate in transit camps and provincial capitals in four Kurdish provinces in the north as well as Basra in the south, he said. The guards will have no investigatory power but will have freedom of movement throughout the provinces in which they are based, Mr. Bernander told a news conference. Mr. Bernander said a final agreement with Baghdad to implement the conditions of the memorandum was "very imminent." "I seem to me that there's no real obstacles to reaching a final agreement," he said. Asked what effect the presence of the U.N. security guards would have on allied forces in the north, Mr. Bernander said: "This is not a police force or a military contingent stated to replace allied

Israel expels 4 from Gaza to Lebanon

RASHAYA (Agencies) — Four Palestinians expelled from the occupied Gaza Strip by the Israeli authorities crossed into Lebanon's Bekaa Valley Saturday, security sources reported. The men walked through the Zammaraya gateway that links Israel's self-proclaimed "security zone" with the Bekaa Valley in southeast Lebanon at about 3 p.m. (1200 GMT). The Israeli army expelled the four Palestinian refugees after accusing them of fomenting anti-Israeli violence. All were said to be members of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Fateh faction. The United States and other Western governments have criticised the expulsions by Israel, saying these violate Geneva conventions regulating the treatment of civilians in occupied lands. In Lebanon, one security source said the four men were flown in an Israeli helicopter early in the day to the "security zone." They turned themselves over to a Syrian army checkpoint near Zammaraya, he said. Further details were not available.

The latest expulsions raised to 67 the number of Palestinians expelled by Israel since the start of the uprising in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip in December 1987. Last Jan. 8, Israel expelled to Lebanon four Palestinians connected with the Muslim fundamentalist Hamas organisation. The four expelled Saturday were Jamal Yassin Hassan Abu Habel, Muin Mohammad Maslan, Hisham Mohammad Ali Dahalan and Jamal Abed Rabu Mohammad Abu Jadyan. Israel on March 24 ordered their expulsions. The Israeli supreme court upheld the expulsion order on Thursday and rejected a request by the Palestinians' lawyers for a second hearing. U.S. Secretary of State James Baker has repeatedly asked Israel to stop expelling Palestinians from the occupied territories to show the government was seriously seeking peace. The Israeli supreme court's rejection of the Palestinians' appeals of their expulsion came as Mr. Baker concluded his latest diplomatic shuttle to the Middle East to set up an Arab-Israeli peace conference. The families of the four had appealed to Mr. Baker to intervene and halt the expulsions, or to take their sons and husbands with him to the United States. The Palestinian lawyer for the four, Freih Abu Medien, head of the Gaza Bar Association, denounced the expulsions as a "political decision taken by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir to block any process towards peace."

Opening Soon
THE BOAT
Gardens str. - Amman

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Kuwait today begins trial of 'collaborators'

KUWAIT (Agencies) — The first of 200 people suspected of collaborating with the Iraqi army go on trial in Kuwait Sunday in an atmosphere poisoned by bitterness towards Palestinians who rallied to Iraq during the Gulf war.

The names and nationalities of the suspects has not been made public but the acting attorney-general said this week that the bulk of 200 cases involved Palestinians, Iraqi residents of Kuwait and a handful of Kuwaitis.

Hamed Al Othman said 45 cases of collaboration had been prepared for trial from 900 criminal cases under investigation and those found guilty of breaching state security could be executed.

In the past, executions have been carried out by public hanging.

Mr. Othman said collaboration charges meant:

- Passing important information to the enemy on internal military matters;
- Sheltering enemy troops;
- Taking steps that helped entrench the occupation army; and
- Espionage.

The trials open in atmosphere soured, like the air Kuwait residents breathe, by the seven-month Iraqi occupation and the devastation which occurred in the Gulf war.

A 400,000-strong Palestinian community thrived in Kuwait before the Gulf crisis, earning a good living from Kuwait's vast wealth with jobs in the service industry and professions.

But relations between the Palestinians and their hosts changed dramatically and probably irreversibly when the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) backed Iraq in the showdown with Kuwait's U.S.-led allies.

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat publicly aligned the group with Iraq after Baghdad linked its occupation of Kuwait last Aug. 2 into a crusade for Palestinian rights and a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Kuwait had been a PLO supporter, but, like its Gulf allies, is believed to have suspended the

millions of dollars it once gave the organisation to pursue its campaign for nationhood.

Palestinians and human rights groups say many of the 200,000 Palestinians who remained in Kuwait during and after the occupation have been singled out by militias and security forces for abduction, interrogation and sometimes torture.

The government, under pressure from key allies, says such abuses have stopped as the emirate comes under the full control of its security forces, but Palestinians say they still live in fear of being abducted by the army, security or militias.

They complain privately of being questioned about their loyalty during the Gulf war and their actions in the seven months when Kuwait was Iraq's 19th province.

As more Kuwaitis return from exile, Palestinians say they are keeping a low profile, staying in their own residential areas and out of harm's way, especially from militias armed with weapons seized during and after Iraqi occupation ended.

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker said a month ago that Washington's support for the emirate could fade unless human rights abuses stopped.

The emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, told him on April 22 that such excesses had ended, and Western diplomats believe the authorities are sincere in their efforts to clamp down.

Thousands of guns remain outside government control in the hands of militias and resistance fighters hitherto at the way a shining example of economic success has been smashed, its capital looted and its oil wells set ablaze in the war.

Interior Minister Sheikh Ahmad Hamoud Al Jaber Al Sabah issued an order at the weekend for the return of all weapons and ammunition, whether licensed or unlicensed, in private hands.

Thousands of rifles, rocket propelled grenades and launchers are believed to be hidden in private Kuwaiti homes for self-defence or to enforce street law.

North Somalia declares independence along divide

NAIROBI (R) — Northern Somalia has declared independence from the fractious south in a bid to return the war-ravaged country to its colonial boundaries, a spokesman for northern rebels said Saturday.

"All the northern clans have come together and said they want independence from the south. They want to put the clock back to 1960," Osman Ahmad Hassan, representative of the Somali National Movement (SNM), said by telephone from London.

"We are cutting the ties between ex-Italian Somaliland and ex-British Somalia," he said, referring to the Italian colony and British protectorate which united to form the independent Somali republic on July 1, 1960.

SNM radio, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corpora-

tion, said the decision to form a separate government was taken at a meeting of its central committee on Thursday, but gave no further details how it would set up its administration.

The SNM, formed in 1981 and the oldest of three major clan-based armed factions in Somalia, took control of the northern region when government troops fled or surrendered after former President Mohammad Siad Barre was ousted in January.

It has refused to recognise an interim government established in Mogadishu by the United Somali Congress (USC).

Despite USC calls for peace, and mediation efforts by Italy and Egypt, fighting between the USC and the Somali Patriotic Movement has continued.

IN APPRECIATION

The British Embassy in Amman and Mrs. Rose Shibly express their deep appreciation and gratitude to all who had offered condolences on the death of

"ADIB GEORGE SHIBLY"

Either by attending the funeral, and paying visit at home to offer condolences or by sending telegrams or wreaths; and those who telephoned their condolences. Special appreciation goes to the diplomatic missions and former ministers and members of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament, heads and members of religious communities and officials.

We hope this will serve as a special word of thanks to each one of them.

May God bless you all

U.S. troops to stay in Kuwait for 4 months

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Defence Secretary Dick Cheney has ordered 3,700 fresh U.S. troops to Kuwait to replace departing Americans as part of a "continued military presence" there, the Defence Department said Friday.

Meanwhile, President George Bush told Congress that thousands of U.S. troops must remain in northern Iraq for now to aid and protect the Kurdish minority from Iraqi forces.

Both Bush and Mr. Cheney said that the U.S. government wants to bring American soldiers home from the Gulf region as quickly as possible and has no intention of keeping a permanent post-war ground force in the area.

But Mr. Bush said it was necessary to keep U.S. troops in northern Iraq, at least until the United Nations assumes full responsibility for the relief effort.

And Mr. Cheney said the deployment of replacement troops to Iraq's neighbour "recognises the need for a continued U.S. military presence in Kuwait, given the current situation in the Gulf and the need for the government of Kuwait to reconstitute its forces."

Mr. Bush also signed a bill Friday authorising \$425 million to replenish refugee and disaster aid accounts for the Kurds in northern Iraq.

The measure is a companion to a \$356-million appropriations bill that would actually spend the money but which has not yet passed Congress. The appropriations bill, now before a House-Senate conference committee, has a higher price tag because it also includes funds to reimburse the military for relief-effort related costs.

The Defence Department said in its statement that the 11th armoured cavalry regiment, headquartered in Fulda, Germany, will send elements of three squadrons to Kuwait.

The new troops are to be in place by mid-June and will remain there until Sept. 1. Their arrival will allow some 3,700 members of the Third Armoured Division, along with some 1,300 combat support personnel, to leave.

"We have agreed as a temporary measure to leave forces there for now. But it is our objective to get U.S. forces out as quickly as possible. And the president has made it clear that we don't want a permanent ground presence in the Gulf," the statement quoted Mr. Cheney as saying.

Instead, Mr. Cheney has said, the Bush administration wants to keep a strengthened naval presence in the Gulf, be permitted to store enough supplies for a heavy armoured division, and conduct repeated military exercises with the forces of the Gulf states.

Mr. Cheney told reporters on a recent trip to the Gulf that Kuwaiti leaders had asked that American troops be left in the country temporarily.

Interviewed on the Cable News Network (CNN) in a programme to be shown Saturday, Cheney said the troops are needed because the situation in Kuwait "is still very unstable."

"They're not yet really been able to reconstitute their own forces. They are necessarily nervous, given what happened to them just last August, and we have agreed, as a temporary measure, to leave forces there for the next few months," Mr. Cheney said.

"(It) is our objective to get them out as quickly as possible, and the president has made it clear we don't want a permanent long-lasting ground presence in the Gulf," he said on the Evans and Novak programme.

Begin: Israel should insist on direct negotiations with Arabs

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — In a rare interview to an Israeli daily, former Prime Minister Meachem Begin said Israel must insist on direct talks with the Arab states.

Mr. Begin's remark came after U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's latest Middle East shuttle to set up a peace conference left two key questions unresolved.

The former premier is responsible for Israel's only peace with an Arab state. In September 1978, Mr. Begin signed the U.S.-sponsored Camp David accords with Egypt and agreed to return the Sinai Desert.

"We need to insist on direct negotiations with the Arab states. I hope that is what will be," the 77-year-old Begin told the daily Yedioth Ahronoth.

The paper had asked Mr. Begin what intermediary stage he thought would lead most easily to bilateral talks with the Arabs.

Israel insists the proposed peace conference be a one-time session leading to direct talks with Arab states and Palestinians.

The Arab countries want a continuing conference and a role for Europe and the United Nations. Israel is concerned the United Nations would weigh scales in favour of the Arabs.

Mr. Baker is trying to bridge

the differences and news reports said Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir had agreed to a "clearly defined and limited" European role in the conference. The reports added that Mr. Shamir agreed to submit final documents of Arab-Israeli agreements to U.N. headquarters.

Mr. Begin, an anti-British terrorist leader in Palestine, founded the Herut Party, the precursor of Shamir's Likud Bloc. He won a landslide victory in the 1977 national elections and stepped down as premier in 1983 without explanation.

At the time, he was said to be depressed about Israel's prolonged military involvement in Lebanon and the death of his wife.

The Israeli public commonly blames Housing Minister Ariel Sharon, defence minister and architect of the 1982 Lebanon war, for Begin's resignation and solitary life. Many Israelis believe the former defence minister lied to Begin about operations in Lebanon.

In September 1982 Sharon allowed militiamen enter Sabra and Shatila refugee camps where they massacred hundreds of Palestinian civilians. The incident raised an international uproar

and hurt Israel's image abroad. Mr. Begin's secretary, Yehiel Kadishai, told Israeli Television that "the premier did not resign because of Ariel Sharon" but because he couldn't be prime minister anymore.

Mr. Begin has seldom appeared in public since his resignation. He grants few interviews and only rarely comments on the radio about current political affairs.

Mustapha Khalil, prime minister when Egypt became the only Arab state to make peace with Israel, has urged Syria and Israel to conduct direct talks over the Golan Heights.

"Negotiations have to be bilateral because the Golan Heights issue is completely different from the Palestinian issue," Mr. Khalil said in an interview with Israel Television broadcasts from Cairo Friday night.

The only Arab state formally at peace with Israel, Egypt is seen as a potential bridge between Israel and other Arab states.

Mr. Khalil, Egypt's prime minister in the late 1970s, said just as Egypt had negotiated the return of the Sinai peninsula, Syria would have to deal directly with Israel about the Golan Heights.

Rebels continue Kandahar attack amid political moves

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Rebels continued their assault on Afghanistan's second largest city Saturday, even as insurgent leaders stalked a political end to the war that could involve the ruling party, sources said Saturday.

Observers say Afghanistan's warring factions have moved a step closer to a solution with some guerrilla leaders talking about a post-war role for the communist-styled Wattan party of Afghan President Najibullah.

"Some Mujahideen may be willing to accept the Wattan party in an election, but, excluding Najibullah and his cabinet," said Qarihar Saeed, a member of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's hardline Muslim party Hezb-i-Islami.

A former chief of Afghanistan's feared secret service, Mr. Najibullah remained his party Wattan (homeland) nearly two years ago in an attempt to distance himself from his Marxist past. Formerly named the People's Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, the party was synonymous with nine years of Soviet military intervention.

The rebel concession coincides with frantic diplomatic efforts by both rebels and their closest ally, Pakistan.

Key rebel leaders, including Sighatullah Mojaddidi, leader of a self-proclaimed guerrilla government, were in Iran on Saturday, while Pakistan's senior foreign ministry official, Secretary-General Akram Zaki, was shuttling between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Together, Pakistan and Iran hosts more than five Afghan war refugees while Saudi Arabia and the United States has been the major financial backers of the rebels.

Washington announced last week that it would end military aid to the rebels next year. It has spent about \$2 billion on arms for its rebel allies since 1979 when the Red Army intervened militarily in Afghanistan.

Moscow still sends about \$300 million worth of military and humanitarian aid to Kabul each month. But in 1989 it withdrew its soldiers in line with a United Nations brokered agreement.

Meanwhile, guerrilla fighters were into their fourth day Saturday of an offensive against Afghanistan's southeastern city of Kandahar, the country's second largest. The capital city of Kabul is the largest.

Soviet envoy to Israel says emigres want to go back

TEL AVIV (R) — The Soviet vice-consul in Israel said Friday that dozens of Soviet immigrants each day inquire about returning to the Soviet Union, mainly because they cannot find work in Israel, and some have already been repatriated.

"Every day we have quite a number of former Soviet citizens who are coming to us asking for the application forms for the restoration of their Soviet citizenship," the diplomat, Sergei Isakov, said at a briefing for foreign correspondents.

Mr. Isakov said some immigrants had already been repatriated while others, impatient with a bureaucratic process that can take as long as a year, found other ways out of Israel.

"I am very happy that I contributed something to their return to the Soviet Union," Mr. Isakov said.

He was the first Soviet diplomat to say that some of the

250,000 Soviet Jews who have immigrated to Israel since the end of 1989 were trying to return to the Soviet Union.

"The most important thing for them is they can't work here," Mr. Isakov said. "That's why you can find a lot of doctors of science and professors cleaning the streets (here)."

The Gulf war and news of soaring unemployment have slowed the influx of Soviet Jews, prompting the government to halve its forecast for this year from 400,000 to 200,000 immigrants.

The government provides a one-year subsidy to new immigrants. A recent Bank of Israel report warned political instability and economic stagnation in Israel would make it difficult to raise some \$25-billion it is estimated will be needed to absorb a possible influx of one million Soviet immigrants.

Karami blasts militias

ABU DHABI (AP) — Lebanese Prime Minister Omar Karami was quoted Friday as accusing militias in his country of failing to disarm as promised under a plan to end the civil war.

The Dubai-based daily Al Bayan quoted Mr. Karami as saying the militias' actions belied with widespread belief they were cooperating in the peace efforts.

"The (Druze) Progressive Socialist Party asked for a month-long period to have over their guns and the (Christian) Lebanese Forces handed over some useless weapons to the government," Mr. Karami was quoted as saying.

Christian sources told the Associated Press that the Lebanese Forces are sending shipments of arms from the port of Jounieh to be stored in Israel's self-proclaimed "security zone" in South Lebanon.

That report could not be independently confirmed.

Former Interior Minister Abdullah Al Rasi was quoted in the Al Bayan story as saying the militias that turned in their guns first tried to make sure the weapons would not be useful to the government.

"They destroyed them before handing them over," he reportedly said.

The newspaper reported that Mr. Karami said the militia leaders were "gambling" they would benefit from political changes in the region, such as the current American drive to arrange Arab-Israeli peace.

"Some militias are used to such external gambling to turn the Lebanese domestic situation to their favour although their gambling over the Gulf crisis has failed," he reportedly said, without elaborating.

Al Bayan said Mr. Karami accused the militias of blocking the government's efforts to establish peace in Lebanon but vowed to maintain the Arab League-backed peace effort.

Under that plan, the army is supposed to establish its control over most of Lebanon by July 1.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Illegal calls made to Middle East — court

BOSTON, Massachusetts (R) — The alleged kingpin of a sophisticated scheme that ran up more than a half million dollars worth of telephone bills by providing illegal long-distance service to Cyprus and Lebanon, was ordered detained on Friday, Joseph Sleiman, 30, of Roslindale, Massachusetts, was arrested after Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents seized telephone equipment at his home. According to court papers, the equipment was alleged to have been used in connection with an illegal operation that provided New England and Canadian clients — usually immigrants wishing to call home — inexpensive long-distance phone calls. Mr. Sleiman and his partners are alleged to have leased offices and phone lines under aliases and sold long-distance phone service cheaply usually to Lebanese immigrants wishing to call home. They ran up more than \$500,000 phone bills they never paid, according to a federal court complaint. According to an FBI affidavit accompanying the complaint in U.S. district court, the ring would work out of an apartment or office over a 30-day period before abandoning the premises and moving on to another site to continue the operation.

One million face starvation in Ethiopia

GENEVA (AP) — Emergency food supplies earmarked for 1.2 million people in Ethiopia will run out within a month unless more international aid is mobilised, a United Nations agency said Friday. The situation has worsened in the camps along the Somali border, where a quarter of the residents now suffer from malnutrition, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said in a statement. It added that about nine children were dying every day at one site. Most warehouses in Ethiopia are now empty and emergency food is being distributed as fast as it comes in, the agency said. "The food we know is coming is barely sufficient for the next 30 days," said Tessa Williams, a UNHCR field officer who had just returned from a visit to camps in the Ogaden, Ethiopia's southeastern region bordering Somalia. "Despite the media's attention being concentrated elsewhere, let us hope that the world has some compassion left." Escalation of civil strife in Somalia this year has almost doubled the number of Somali refugees in Ethiopia to about 600,000, UNHCR said. Another 222,000 Ethiopians who fled to Somalia during fighting in the Ogaden region have returned home to the same area. Some 400,000 Sudanese refugees are in camps in western Ethiopia, having fled civil war in their country, the agency said.

Tom King to visit S. Arabia, Kuwait

LONDON (R) — British Defence Secretary Tom King flies to the Gulf Sunday for a four-day visit to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, the Ministry of Defence said. Mr. King will be accompanied by General Sir Peter de la Billiere, the former British forces commander in the Gulf who is acting in his own capacity as the defence ministry's adviser on the Middle East. Mr. King will hold talks with Saudi and Kuwaiti government leaders on future military cooperation and other defence and security issues. He will also visit the remaining British forces stationed in the area — a 3,000-strong battle group in Kuwait and about 5,000 men in Saudi Arabia, to organise the removal of British supplies and equipment.

Moderate earthquake reported in Iraq

NICOSIA (AP) — A moderate earthquake shook southwestern Iraq on Saturday, Tehran Radio reported. There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage. The state-run radio said the quake registered 4.8 on the open-ended Richters scale and was centered about 400 kilometres southwest of Tehran near the city of Khorramabad. An earthquake of magnitude 4 is considered capable of causing moderate damage. One registering 5 on the Richter scale can cause considerable damage.

'U.S. offered asylum to Mashat'

OTTAWA (AP) — Washington offered asylum to Iraq's former ambassador to the United States, but he refused it and instead sought refuge in Canada, according to a secret memo to the former Canadian Immigration minister. The April 12 memo on the status of Mohammad Al Mashat was written by Terry Sheehan, executive director of operations at the immigration department. It was addressed to Immigration Minister Barbara McDougall, who became foreign minister in a April 21 cabinet shuffle, the Canadian Press reported Friday. "At one point, Dr. Al Mashat was offered asylum in the USA but refused the offer," the Canadian news agency quoted Mr. Sheehan's memo as saying. Ms. McDougall said earlier this week that the memo was her first notification that Mr. Mashat had come to Canada on March 30. She made no mention of Mr. Mashat's having been offered asylum in the United States. Senior Canadian officials have said they were left in the dark about Mr. Mashat's petition to immigrate to Canada until after it had already been granted. Opposition legislators have demanded an inquiry into the affair.

Paper says Tunisian plot uncovered

TUNIS (AP) — Investigators have uncovered a plot by an Islamic fundamentalist movement to seize power in October, a pro-government newspaper reported Saturday. La Presse, a daily which generally reflects government views, said the plot was uncovered in the course of an investigation into violent clashes earlier this month between security forces and fundamentalist students at the University of Tunis. About 100 people, including members of the military, reportedly have been arrested in connection with the alleged plot by the Al Nahda movement to establish an Islamic regime. The government has refused to recognise Al Nahda as a legal political party and has arrested many of its supporters in crackdowns over the past four years. Authorities accused Al Nahda of organising disturbances at the university on May 8. Two students were killed, and at least seven policemen and three students were injured in clashes triggered by the banning of a fundamentalist students union associated with Al Nahda. Police said weapons and Molotov cocktails had been found in the student group's office in March.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:15 Cartoons
19:00 L'École de Faux
19:15 News in French
19:30 Strategic
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Mother and Son
21:10 All our Children
22:00 News in English
22:30 Paradise

PRAYER TIMES

05:03 Fajr
12:37 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:52 Dhuhr
16:13 Asr
19:32 Maghrib
20:01 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swetlich Tel. 810740
Assembly of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 62543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751
Assiout International Church Tel. 685326
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811285
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 813817, 654932
Church of the Nazarene Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Another rise in temperatures will take place and winds will be light and variable becoming at times north-westerly moderate. In Amman, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.
Min./max. temp.
Amman 12 / 26

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Agaba 20 / 34
Deserts 11 / 31
Jordan Valley 17 / 33

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 26, Aqaba 30, Humidity readings: Amman 40 per cent, Aqaba 25 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Walid Smadi 683266
Dr. Ramzi Mizawi 894788
Dr. Mahmoud Azzam 819925
Dr. Mohammad Al Ajlani 894184
First pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778536
Al Asema pharmacy 637053
Nasrallah pharmacy 626672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

IRBID:
Dr. Mazen Abu Baker (—)
Al Shura'a pharmacy 273825

ZARQA:
Dr. Abdul Karim Khashashneh (—)
Khalid pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Emergency 603041
Rescue Police 192, 61111, 657777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630251
Hotel Complaints 605800
Police Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 636381
Company 08-53200
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (direct assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Abdali Maternity, J. Amn. 64251/6
Abdali Maternity, J. Amn. 64241/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malham, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 6641714
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845

HOSPITALS

Al-Musharraf Hospital 6672719
The Islamic, Abdali 66612757
Al-Ahl, Abdali 6641646
Italian, Al-Muhajirah 77101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 77511/26
Amal, Marka 89161/15
Queen Alia Hospital 60224050
Anad Hospital 674135
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)991071
Bin Sina Hospital (09)987332
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
For Al Nafoos Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information department at the Queen Alia International

Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

13:40 Tripoli (LN)
19:15 Larnaca (CY)

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

18:15 Jeddah (RJ)
18:25 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
18:40 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
18:45 Paris, Geneva (RJ)
18:55 London, Brussels (RJ)
19:00 Madrid, Rome (RJ)
19:15 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)

Home News

JORDAN TIMES, SUNDAY, MAY 19, 1991 3

Jordan to attend ILO session

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will take part in the 78th session of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the International Labour Office which will be held in Geneva on June 5.

The Jordanian delegation will be headed by Labour Minister Abdul Karim Al Dughmi.

Participants in the meetings will discuss the ILO's last year achievements and the organisation's plan of action and general budget for the next year.

They will also discuss issues pertaining to the application of a new agricultural technology, the apartheid policy in South Africa, and a report prepared by a fact-finding mission who visited the occupied Arab territories to get first-hand information about Israeli practices against Arab labourers and violations of trade union's freedom as well as the confiscation of land and controlling of Arab water sources.

Arab delegations taking part in the ILO meetings will hold a special meeting in Geneva, on June 3, to coordinate their stands towards all issues of interest to the Arab Nation.

The Jordanian delegation groups Ministry of Labour officials, representatives of businessmen in Jordan and the General Federation of the Jordanian Trade Union and the federation's Executive Bureau.

Ministry lures Italian tourists

AMMAN (J.T.) — A group of 125 Italian tourists, including journalists and tour operators, is due here Sunday on a week-long visit to Jordan in the course of a new plan by the Ministry of Tourism to stimulate the tourism industry in Jordan.

The group's trip was organised by the Italian tourist firm Bonco Enisio whose director general met Saturday with Minister of Tourism David Khalaf to discuss further means of stimulating the industry and bringing in more tourist groups from Italy.

Mr. Khalaf said that the Ministry of Tourism had charted plans designed to develop tourist facilities and meet the needs of tourists from Italy, which, he said, constitutes the second major supplier of tourists to Jordan.

The group will be taken around various archaeological sites and places of interest in the company of guides and Ministry of Tourism officials.

Ministry of Tourism Secretary General Nasri Attallah, who attended the meeting with the minister, said earlier that the Italians were coming on what he called a "peace tour" of the Kingdom.

The Ministry of Tourism had earlier arranged similar visits for other groups from Finland and other European countries.

The programme is being launched now that the war has ended in the Gulf and the various airlines are operating normal flights to Jordan," Mr. Attallah said.

Mr. Attallah estimated Jordan's losses of income due to the war at \$250 million, and noted that the country's hotels had at one time to lay off three quarters of their employees because of poor business.

Mr. Attallah earlier this month accompanied Her Majesty Queen Noor to Liverpool, England, where an exhibition of Jordanian artifacts went on display to help attract tourists to the Kingdom's treasures.

Doctor presents lecture on intifada

AMMAN (J.T.) — "My Experience in Gaza During the Intifada" will be the title of a lecture to be delivered by Dr. Pauline Cutting Sunday at 7:30 p.m. at the Professional Associations Complex in Shmeisani.

Dr. Cutting, who worked as a trauma surgeon in Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza for six months, is the author of "Children of the Siege".

The lecture, with a slide presentation, is organised by Jordan Medical Aid for Palestinians (JMAAP).



Labour Minister Abdul Karim Al Dughmi Saturday inspects work in the simulator at Queen Alia International Airport (Petra photo)

JMA elections expected to attract large number of voters

AMMAN (J.T.) — Only two weeks from the day appointed for the election of a new president and board for the Jordanian Medical Association (JMA) there are signs that the two candidates for the post, Hassan Khreis and Ishaq Maraqa are running neck to neck.

Both candidates enjoy deep respect from the association members and each one stands a good chance to win in view of the huge number of registered voters, said an official at the Jordan Professional Association Complex.

To date 3,400 physicians and specialists have registered to vote in the election, due on May 31, out of an original 9,000 JMA registered doctors, he said.

Dr. Khreis, who is running for the post of presidency for the fifth time, represents the Democratic Alliance Bloc, while Dr. Ishaq Maraqa, who represents the Islamic movement, is running for the post for the first time.

The new president succeeds Mamdouh Abbadi who has assumed the post for two consecutive terms, each lasting two



Hassan Khreis

years.

Along with the election of the president, the JMA members will have to elect nine members of the JMA board out of 34 registered candidates, the official said.

One week from now the JMA General Assembly is expected to convene in order to debate the JMA financial and administrative report. It will also discuss the coming elections which are expected by many JMA members to

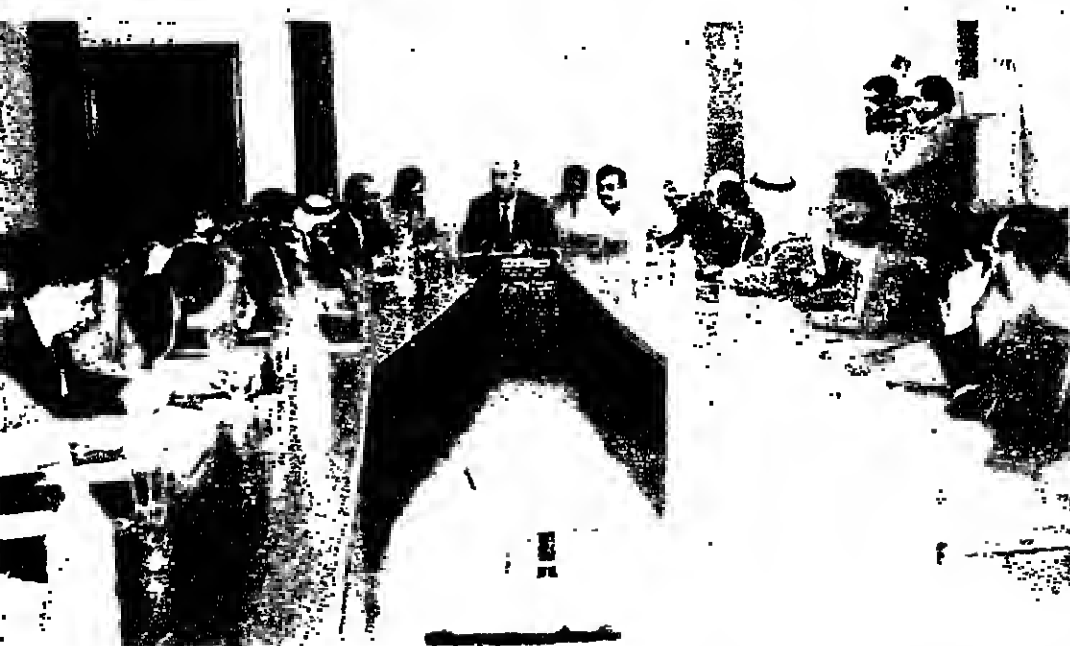


Ishaq Maraqa

be rather heated.

According to the official, this is the first time in JMA history that so many registered members will take part. The official said in previous JMA elections between 1,500 and 2,500 used to participate.

To facilitate matters for doctors taking part in the coming election, the JMA has assigned three election centres: Amman, Irbid in the north, and Karak in the south.



Minister of Planning Khaled Amin Abdullah Saturday chairs a meeting on the function and programmes of the employment and development fund (Petra photo)

Meeting reviews employment, development fund's function

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Planning Khaled Amin Abdullah Saturday chaired a meeting to discuss the function and programmes of the employment and development fund which was recently established to finance income — generating projects for the needy and limited-income groups in Jordan.

The fund is designed to rehabilitate and find work for at least 30 per cent of the Jordanian population, those described as the less fortunate group within the Jordanian society, according to the minister who was addressing a group of Parliament members, the director of the Industrial Development Bank (IDB) and directors of a number of organisations involved in operating the fund.

In reviewing the aims of the fund and its resources and terms for obtaining loans for projects, the minister said that the government was determined to follow this path in order to alleviate the sufferings of the low-income and needy groups in Jordan by providing soft loans that can help family heads to earn a decent living.

The main source for the fund, he said, is the state's treasury, but the fund will be receiving contributions and donations from va-

rious other sources.

Families eligible for such loans are those with monthly salaries not exceeding JD 120, the unemployed, but with sufficient skills to start a business requiring backing and financial support, the

minister pointed out.

The minister said that the fund would charge only two per cent interest on the loans and was currently looking for financial resources to provide money for the initial stages.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

King, Prince condole Al Karaki family

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Saturday visited Al Karaki family to condole them on behalf of His Majesty King Hussein and in his own name on the death of Abdul Aziz Al Karaki, father of Minister of Culture Khaled Al Karaki.

Hospitals receive anti-cancer drugs

AMMAN (J.T.) — Upon Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath's initiative anti-cancer drugs have been distributed to the three major hospitals in Amman: the Royal Medical Services, Jordan University Hospital and Al Bashir Hospital. These anti-cancer drugs, valued at JD 15,000 have been donated from private sources in Germany and Spain through Her Royal Highness's personal contacts. Part of the donation was raised by the Amman Baccalaureate School. More donations are expected.

RJ planning to Jordanise staff

AMMAN (Petra) — Labour Minister Abdul Karim Al Dughmi Saturday visited the Queen Alia International Airport (QAIA) at the invitation of Royal Jordanian (RJ), inspected work at different sections and was briefed on the activities of non-Jordanian workers.

RJ Director General Husam Abu Ghazaleh and senior RJ officials who accompanied Mr. Dughmi on the visit announced that the national airline was still employing 156 non-Jordanians in the absence of Jordanian substitutes.

Currently RJ employs 300 Jordanian pilots and only eight non-Jordanian ones, down from 59 non-Jordanians in 1984, said

RJ officials.

The labour minister was told that engineers and technicians from various Arab and foreign countries had been receiving training at the simulator installed at the airport, earning Jordan JD 632,000 in returns in 1990 alone.

They said that the simulator employed 54 people out of whom four only are non-Jordanian technicians.

Training of non-Jordanian pilots on the simulator earned RJ \$1.3 million in the past year, officials said.

Pilots, they said, come from the Turkish, French, Libyan, Yemeni, Syrian, German and Nigerian airlines and there are new contracts for training Tun-

sian and Algerian pilots.

In the services and catering unit RJ employs 431 employees, of whom 300 are Jordanians and the rest, including 121 hostesses, are non-Jordanians. This is the first time in RJ's history that it succeeds in employing more Jordanian than non-Jordanian hostesses, officials said.

RJ officials said that the airport's catering unit served all Arab and foreign airlines using the airport and offered nearly 3,500 meals on a daily basis.

The labour minister, who was accompanied by his aides and senior ministry officials, visited the Engineering and Maintenance Department and was told that out of 1,381 staff members

there, 13 were non-Jordanian technicians with special skills.

According to the officials, RJ's departments were constantly providing training to Jordanians to gradually take over the business in full from the remaining non-Jordanian workers.

They said that the Engineering and Maintenance Department last year offered services to Iraqi, Yemeni, Syrian, Sudanese, Sri Lankan, Canadian, Egyptian and other airlines earning the country \$9.17 million.

Following the tour, Mr. Dughmi voiced his satisfaction with the airlines' policy concerning the workers, and said that the visit gave him a deeper insight into the airlines' activities.

Seminar to review political, economic, military, social issues

AMMAN (Petra) — The Amman-based Islamic Studies and Research Centre will organise a special political seminar on May 27 under the slogan "Towards a Stronger Jordan," and the participants will review several working papers dealing with economic, social, military and political affairs, according to an announcement.

The organisers at the centre said that the seminar, in which various prominent personalities representing different ideologies and political orientations in Jordan would participate, was designed to lay the groundwork for a strong foundation of integrated popular activity at the local, Arab and Islamic levels.

The announcement said that the theme was carefully chosen to reflect the need for building up a strong intrinsic Arab power, with Jordan serving a pivotal role in view of its location and its past and present endeavours in confronting the enemy's expansionist plans.

The centre's Secretary General Bilal Al Tal said that the day-long seminar was expected to discuss four working papers dealing with political, economic, social and military issues prepared by specialists in the fields.

"A large number of prominent people in the political, social, economic and military fields will be invited to take part in reviewing these issues and come up with a joint formula for a plan of action designed to see a stronger Jordan, capable of performing its national duty," Mr. Tal said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The working papers at the seminar, he said, will be presented by Abdullah Al Kharib, executive president of the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS), Dr. Fayez Tarawneh, Parliament member Ahmad Azaideh and retired army officer Ghazi Tweisli.

RJ says it lost \$100m during the Gulf crisis

AMMAN (J.T.) — Royal Jordanian (RJ), the national air carrier, announced Saturday that it had sustained \$100 million losses, at the rate of \$12.5 million a month, as a result of the Gulf crisis which began last August and that it planned to open new stations abroad to expand its operations.

The announcement was made by RJ's Director General Husam Abu Ghazaleh who said that the losses had resulted from the soaring prices of fuel and the surcharge in insurance premiums, in view of the situation that prevailed in the region, and the losses in tourism and transit passengers as well as the closure of the Gulf air zone during the Gulf crisis.

Abu Ghazaleh said that losses also resulted from stationing most of RJ's fleet in European capitals to avoid paying extra insurance fees on RJ planes if they operated in the Middle East and the Gulf zone.

The rise in fuel prices and insurance premiums, he said, coincided with a drastic fall in passenger and cargo traffic in the region during the crisis.

RJ used to pay \$250,000 a month, but during the crisis the fees jumped to \$520,000, and later went down to \$350,000 before going back to normal, according to RJ officials.

Britain, France, Germany, Spain and the United States were among countries which advised their citizens to avoid travelling to Jordan because of the tension in Middle East, thus reducing the number of air passengers, they said.

According to Abu Ghazaleh, RJ resumed flights gradually to various destinations as of April and May, and has now worked out flight schedules to various destinations in the Gulf area and Europe.

As of the coming month, RJ will draw up a summer plan which will take into consideration the

pilgrimage (Hajj) season, the return of expatriates and students as well as businessmen and tourists traffic.

Abu Ghazaleh said in his statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that RJ planned to open new stations abroad and the airline would announce further details about their plans early next month.

During the Gulf crisis RJ chartered some of its aircraft to international organisations, for the repatriation of evacuees from Kuwait and Iraq to various destinations, but it cancelled all its eastward flights in view of the situation in the Gulf zone.

In February RJ resumed limited flights to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates and a few weeks later the airline announced resumption of normal flights to all its destinations and the cancellation of all insurance surcharge premiums imposed during the crisis by the foreign insurance companies.

Iran keen on promoting ties with Jordan — parliamentarians

AMMAN (J.T.) — A delegation representing the Iranian Shura (parliament) discussed the Palestine question and Iranian-Jordanian relations here Saturday with Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Abdul Latif Arabiyat and handed him a message from the Iranian parliament Speaker Mehdi Karubi.

The delegation, which arrived here Friday from Syria, is led by Ahmad Uzeizi, chairman of an Iranian parliamentary committee in charge of international parliamentary affairs, who voiced his country's keen interest on promoting ties and cooperation with Jordan in various fields.

Mr. Uzeizi said Iran wished to coordinate its foreign policies at various international fora with those of Jordan and to boost bilateral cooperation.

He extended an invitation to Mr. Arabiyat to visit Tehran and hold talks with Iranian members of parliament.

The delegation's visit to Amman is the second by an Iranian parliamentary group since February this year shortly after a deci-

sion by Amman and Tehran to restore diplomatic ties between the two countries after a break of nearly 10 years.

Mr. Arabiyat underlined the importance of coordinating Jordanian-Iranian positions, especially with regard to the Palestine question, which, he said, is of concern to all Muslims.

"In view of its geographic location and its proximity to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian problem, Jordan has been shouldering a serious burden and is now in need of further backing and assistance from its sister Islamic states in order to confront the challenges," Mr. Arabiyat said at the meeting.

Mr. Arabiyat welcomed Iran's proposal to hold an international parliamentary conference to dis-

cuss the Palestine question and to voice support for the Palestinian people.

"There is no doubt that such a conference would give political international backing for the Palestinian people and their just cause," Arabiyat noted.

Upon his arrival here Friday, Mr. Uzeizi said that Iran was calling for such a conference to canvass support for the Palestinians and said that he would sound out Jordan's views and those of other Islamic nations on this important matter.

Iran formally opened its embassy in Amman last March when the Iranian flag was hoisted at a special ceremony on the temporary embassy premises, but the two countries have not yet exchanged ambassadors.

WHAT'S GOING ON EXHIBITION

☆ Art exhibition by Nazir Ismail at the French Cultural Centre.
☆ Exhibition of etchings, lithographs and monographs, by Ahmad Nawash and Yasser Duweik at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation (10 a.m. — 5 p.m.)

Over 30 industries to take part in Bucharest trade fair

Romania — a potential market for Jordanian goods

By Maha Addasi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — In view of the loss of the Gulf markets, brought about by the Gulf crisis, Jordan is looking for alternative markets, mostly in Europe where industrialists feel that the potential is strongest.

A seemingly good opportunity to promote Jordanian goods in European markets will be provided by the International Trade Fair to be held in Romania during the first week of June.

The Romanian Embassy in Amman Saturday held a meeting for the Jordanian businessmen who are interested in participating in the annual trade week to be held in Bucharest at the end of May.

The meeting aimed at informing the businessmen of the Romanian legislation within the frame of the governmental programme of economical reform, especially after the overthrow of the totalitarian regime in Dec. 1989.

Mr. Farouk Hadidi, the director of exports development who will be the director of the entire Jordanian section at the Bucharest fair, said that at this time of economic de-

pression in Jordan, the trade week in Bucharest was a good chance for Jordanian businessmen to explore the potentials of an alternative market.

"This trade week will be an opportunity for the Jordanian businessmen to introduce their products abroad and hopefully promote the sale of their goods," Mr. Hadidi said.

The Eastern European market could be a potentially large market for Jordanian products among the East European markets, "and it has the potential to grow further."

Akram Abu Zeid, the deputy manager of the Jordanian Commercial Centres, said that so far over 30 Jordanian companies are participating in the upcoming fair. "This is the first time that Jordan participates in the trade fair in Romania," Mr. Abu Zeid said.

"But the Romanian market has the need for everything we produce in Jordan, so industrial Jordanian

companies that are participating in the fair have many good chances for the future."

The secretary general of the Federation of Jordanian Chamber of Commerce, Amin Al Hussein, said that businessmen should try to boost cooperation with Romania "as this is a step forward." We should send more trade groups to Romania first because the trade potential is good and second because it has become increasingly easier to establish trade relations in Romania as meetings with the concerned government sectors are facilitated by the recent reform," Mr. Al Hussein said.

Many traders showed enthusiasm for the event.

"I want to study the possibilities of establishing a series of bakeries in Romania," Mohamad Galeb Abu Sinainieh, an agent of several automatic bakeries in Jordan said. He said that he would like to start a bakery project in Bucharest and eventually spread it to the various cities in Romania.

Another trader, who declined to give his name, said that his aim while participating in the trade fair was to study

the potential to establish a business where he can process raw materials found in Romania, such as molasses.

The companies to be represented in Bucharest include some specialising in clothes, shoes, carpets, ovens, refrigerators, detergents, paints, phosphates, insecticides, shampoos, and tomato paste.

More than 400 companies worldwide will participate in the international fair.

According to the Charge d'Affaires of the Romanian Embassy Petre Popescu, trade relations between Jordan and Romania have been developing steadily. He said that cooperation was mostly between the Romanian and Jordanian specialists in the field of installation of electrical lines and drilling works.

One recent law passed by the parliament of Romania is the "foreign investment law" which offers many advantages to foreign investors, such as exemption from import customs duties, exemption from paying taxes on profits for up to 5 years following investment and a guarantee that foreign investments in Romania shall not be nationalised at any time.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation.
Established 1975
مؤسسة الصحافة الأردنية المستقلة

Chairman of the Board of Directors:
MAHMOUD AL KAYED

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Facsimile: 661242

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
Jordan Times advertising department.

Need for closing ranks

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein's talks with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad Saturday came amid conflicting reports on the real outcome of U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's fourth mission in the region. As it happened, the King also received a message from Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak who will be visiting Damascus after his European tour.

These political moves are important in themselves. But when viewed against other developments related to American-led efforts to hold a peace conference, they might be even more so. U.S. President George Bush said Friday that he now sees "real cause for optimism on the prospects for convening the proposed conference on the Middle East." "My assessment," President Bush told reporters, "is that there is real cause for optimism and we will continue to work this process." It appears that Mr. Baker brought with him in his diplomatic bag some encouraging news to prompt the U.S. chief executive to comment that peace in the Middle East might finally be attainable contrary to earlier reports from Tel Aviv, where the secretary of state had ended his Middle East tour, that there was no breakthrough in the U.S.-Israeli talks, there are now persistent reports that Washington may have entered into secret agreements with Tel Aviv in a bid to surmount the remaining obstacles facing the convening of the conference.

While the nature and scope of such agreements between Israel and the U.S. are yet to be revealed, the situation for the Arabs side remains anything but clear. With Syria's "conditions" still largely depicted as the real hurdle in the path of holding the peace parley, the King's trip to Syria takes on an additional importance, especially in the wake of repeated attempts by some quarters to split the Arab camp and to dilute the conference's meaning beyond recognition.

With Mr. Mubarak's expected trip to Syria on Sunday — a visit that is apparently intended at reassuring the Syrians that there would not be a conference without Syria — the stage is set for a closer coordination and cooperation among the three Arab capitals and others. Full synchronisation between Amman, Damascus and Cairo, over and above Jordanian-Palestinian coordination, is clearly emerging to be a crucial factor in the completion of the cycle of diplomatic and political efforts to present one Arab front to the Americans. President Bush's euphoria about the prospects for peace in the area would remain out of place as long as legitimate Arab concerns about the need to hold a truly effective peace conference on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 are not appreciated and taken into consideration. King Hussein's exchange of views with the Syrian president would have no doubt been aimed at closing Arab ranks and dispelling any fears about where each and every Arab capital stands on the fundamental issues affecting the anticipated peace negotiations. Amman and Damascus are in on this together. But in order to make the Arab effort a real success in the search for real and lasting peace, Jordan and Syria need the backing of not only Egypt but all the Arab countries in this endeavour. Upon his return last night, the King was emphatic about the need and necessity for a pan-Arab effort. Let us hope such a conclusion is inevitable and that it will materialise before too long.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE world is watching James Baker's report to President Bush and awaiting action on the part of the U.S. administration in the light of the outcome of Baker's recent mission in the Middle East, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily Saturday. The same U.S. administration was quick to react to Iraq's occupation of Kuwait last August when Iraq refused to pull out its forces from the emirate, said the paper. But it noted the Israelis now seem to be holding on to lands occupied since 1967; and it is interesting to know the American administration's reaction to the Israeli attitude, the paper noted. So far, the paper said, Washington seems to be adhering to its declared intention of implementing U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 to achieve peace in the region; and President Bush's statement about his determination to bring about an exchange of land for peace is still deeply appreciated and respected by the Arabs, the paper pointed out. But it noted that such commitment is now put to the test, and it remains to be seen whether the U.S. administration wants to apply a just peace or to impose capitulation and injustice. Should the U.S. administration change its mind about the implementation of the international legitimacy then it means that the Middle East will be in for further cycles of terrorism and violence because it would be facing another stage of instability and lack of peace and justice.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily Saturday considers Baker's mission as dead, thanks to Israel's intransigent attitude, and calls on those who showed optimism and enthusiasm about the Baker mission to exchange condolences over the dead mission. Sultan Al Hattah says even if Baker had succeeded in convening a peace conference, the Israelis would have killed his mission at the conference table, because Israel has its own objectives which do not conform to the peace wanted by the Arabs. The writer stressed the fact that the United States was responsible for Israel's intransigent stand since it is the United States which continues to provide backing to Israel's policies, and it is Washington which refuses to exercise any form of pressure on the Zionist state to force it to accept international legitimacy. The writer wonders about the attitude of those Arab countries which backed the United States in its war against Iraq, and wonders about the attitude of those Arabs which called on the United States and the international community to end Iraq's occupation of Kuwait. All Baker's four tours of the region and his talks with Arab and Israeli leaders ended in zero, and all the voices raised during the Gulf war have now fallen silent, says the writer. He says the United States continues to help Israel absorb hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews to be settled on occupied Arab land, and will continue to do so as it slowly turns its back on the Arabs and its allies in the Gulf war.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

What went wrong in Jordan's economic development?

THE government of Jordan adopted economic planning before any other Arab country. As far back as 1952 a 10-year economic programme was established with the assistance of the World Bank. That programme was no economic plan but rather a scenario for ten years. The seven-year economic and social plan for 1963-70 was the first Jordanian experimentation with economic planning. The plan was interrupted by the 1967 occupation of the West Bank and thus was abandoned. The three-year economic and social plan (1973-1975) was the first, and perhaps the best, development plan, formulated by Jordanian economists, and inspired by political vision and national purpose.

Three consecutive five-year plans followed. They were mainly lists of planned projects supported by some objectives which sounded nice but lacked the mechanism for implementation. The last plan (1985-1990) led the country into the crisis and the near collapse of 1988.

Many things must have gone wrong in past economic planning that we now need adjustment programmes to correct the distortions and imbalances that were created under these plans, and to undo the mistakes.

Now that planning is no more fashionable, it is time to look back at our economic planning era to identify the mistakes.

Perhaps, the most fatal mistake was the belief that borrowing had no limits, and that development can be financed with maximum credit and minimum domestic savings.

While we were borrowing heavily to finance projects and make up for the deficit of the budget, the government was willing to subsidise fuel, water, electricity and food. Subsidies turned out to be bribes to the people to keep silent.

Another form of subsidy was the overvalued dinar, which was maintained at a fixed rate against special drawing rights (SDRs) for 15 years despite the domestic inflation rate which was persistently above the rate in the SDR countries. This policy promoted imports and suppressed exports and hurt the competitiveness of Jordanian produce.

The public sector grew out of proportions. The public sector did not only utilise sizeable Arab aid and huge foreign loans, it also borrowed heavily both internally and externally. The private sector was marginalised and reduced to a role of dependency on government spending. Instead of entrepreneurs, the country produced profiteers. Over 50 per cent of the labour force was employed by the public sector to provide government services.

Large-scale projects proved to be feasible in the longer run, yet major mistakes were committed in the implementation stages. They took longer time to establish, and cost double or triple the estimated cost.

Industry was over-protected. Protection exceeded 100 per cent and sometimes 200 per cent of the value added. Protected industry pressed for even higher protection, though it was only limited to the domestic markets.

The development drive took place at a time when people's participation in decision-making was at a minimum, and accountability almost non-existent. This situation inevitably led to corruption at various levels of government.

Economic security was never taken into account. Of course we had no choice but to depend on one port, Aqaba, one industrial complex at the Dead Sea, and one canal adjacent to the ceasefire line to irrigate the area that holds the food basket of the country. We chose to depend on one source of oil, Saudi Arabia, one pipeline to bring it, Tapline, and one refinery to process in Zarqa. Electricity generation was unnecessarily concentrated in one place. Even the second and third stations were placed at the same spot with the first station.

In general, the (1985-1990) plan was based on living on borrowed time beyond our means, the question was not if but when we will have a crisis.

Mistakes were pointed out at various times — in many occasions in this very place — but were frowned upon and dismissed as negative attitude.

The identification of what went wrong in development should not blind us from appreciating the achievements and success in developing the productive capacity of the country and raising the standard of living of the people. The achievements in education, health, communication, transport and chemical industries were first class, and the development of human resources was superb.

Baker mission leaves parties' will for peace in doubt

By Alan Elsner
Reuters

SHANNON, Ireland — U.S. Secretary of State James Baker said Thursday his fourth Middle East peace mission had clarified many issues. But one central point still remains unclear — do Arab states and Israel want peace? Baker ended a hectic week of diplomacy in Israel, where he said he had defined the areas of agreement and disagreement between the United States and Israel about a proposed Middle East peace process.

The areas of agreement, he said, were many. A U.S. official said they included the question of how Palestinians would be represented at the conference table, a key point which has frustrated past peace efforts.

"There remains to be resolved the question of the role, if any, of the United Nations in the process and the question of the extent to which any conference might reconvene," Baker said after meeting Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir Thursday.

These same points were outstanding when Baker embarked on his mission last Friday. Israel insists on a one-day conference without the U.N. and Syria demands a conference under U.N. auspices that could be periodically reconvened.

In that narrow sense, Baker's mission accomplished little. However, the Israelis gave him enough leeway on other points to be able to declare that his effort was not dead.

"I'm certainly not claiming we can make this thing work. But I'm equally not suggesting that the effort is dead at this point," the official said.

Shamir is a past master at handling U.S. secretaries of state who aspire to bring peace

to the Middle East. Last year, he kept Baker on a string for months, saying neither "yes" nor "no" to his plan for convening talks between Israel and Palestinians, before finally turning him down.

Before that, he welcomed Baker's predecessor George Shultz on five fruitless Middle East missions that ultimately achieved nothing except to diminish Shultz's personal prestige.

Baker is acutely aware of this precedent. But he is a prisoner of President Bush's desire to be able to point to a

tangible political achievement flowing from his military victory in the Gulf.

While Bush has said he wants to be a catalyst for Middle East peace, Baker has repeatedly said he cannot impose peace if Arabs and Israelis themselves lack the will to strive for it.

The Baker party feels that the U.N. issue and the question of whether the conference can be reconvened are just excuses the parties are using to avoid committing themselves.

"It goes without saying that you're not going to have a

conference until the countries that are participants in such a conference make a firm decision that this is what they want," Baker said as he left Israel.

The implication, though unstated in public, was clear — they have not yet made such a decision.

Shamir knows that any peace process he enters will ultimately revolve around the question of an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights.

In three speeches last weekend, he vowed yet again

not to give up an inch of this territory, captured in the 1967 Middle East war.

Many of his supporters believe the land was given to Israel by God. Over 100,000 have a direct stake in the land because they live in Jewish settlements there. So from his point of view perhaps it would be better not to enter the process at all.

Arab leaders like Syria's President Hafez Al Assad know that making peace with Israel could Egyptian them to grave internal threats.

They remember what hap-

pened to Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, the only Arab leader yet to make peace with Israel, who was assassinated in 1981.

Assad, with his traditional leadership of the radical Arab camp, is torn between a wish to reassert that role and plotting a pro-western course.

If there was, as Baker stated after the Gulf war, a "window of opportunity" for Middle East peace, nobody was anxious to jump through it and the window is now barely open.

Baker and Bush have several options. They could proceed with their current tactic of having Baker tour the region every few weeks in the hope of making more incremental progress.

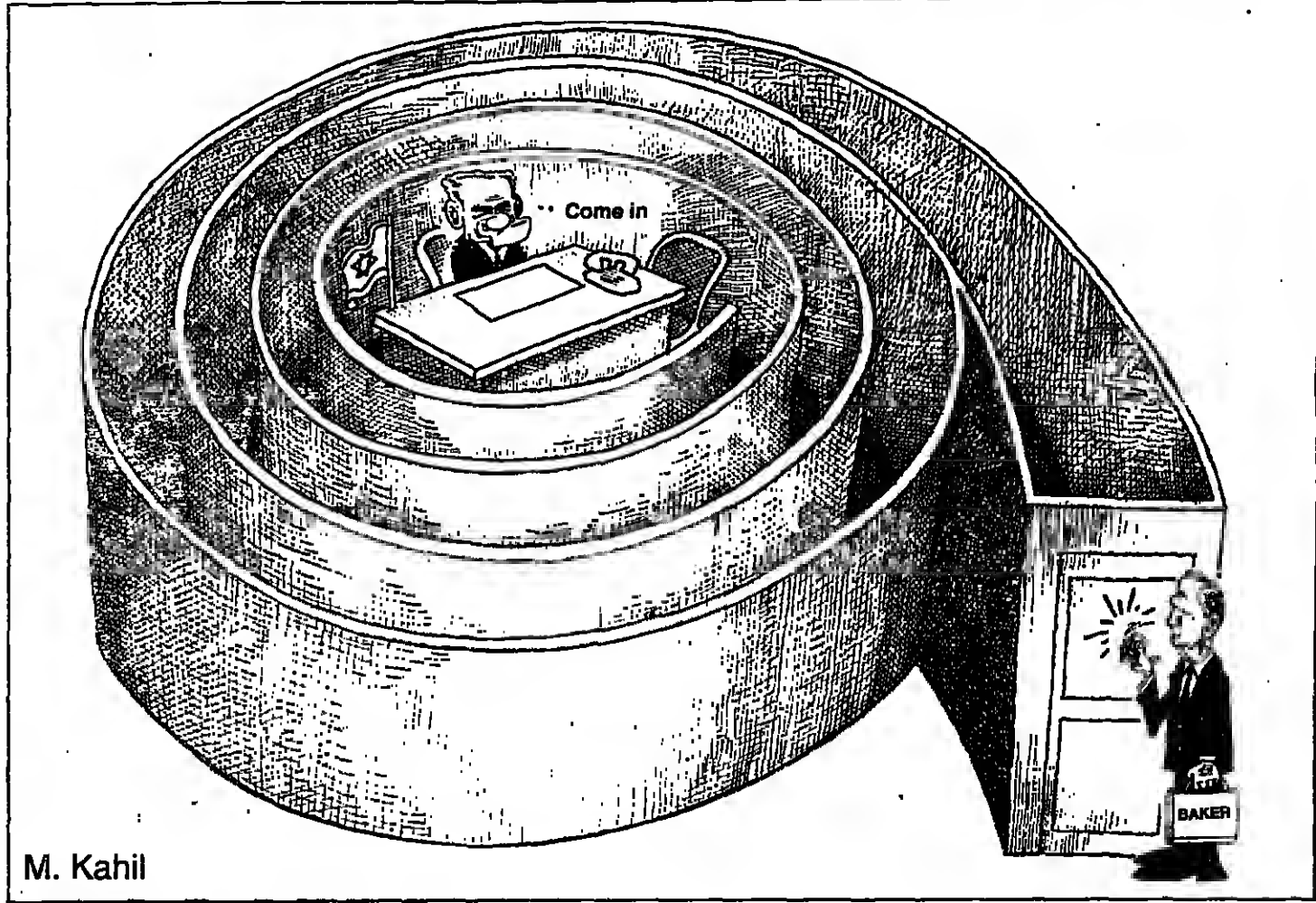
Or Bush himself could take a hand, perhaps with a major policy speech setting out his vision of a Middle East peace settlement, perhaps even by proposing some sort of Middle East summit to break the logjam.

Or they could let the issue rest for a few months and return to it later in the year in the hope that something will have changed by then.

Baker's travel schedule in the next few weeks will take him elsewhere to concentrate on other issues. He will not be able to devote as much time and effort to the Middle East as he has in the past two months.

He plans to attend an Angolan ceasefire signing ceremony in Lisbon at the end of May, a NATO foreign ministers' meeting in early June and a European security conference in mid-June.

There is also the question of a Soviet-U.S. summit to discuss, a mid-July summit of the seven major industrial nations in London to prepare and a gruelling trip to Asia scheduled for late July.



War as catharsis; post-war cosmetics

By Mohammad Zakaria

THROUGHOUT the Gulf crisis, the disciples of Western culture were consistently true to their education. With their copies of "Hamlet" deftly nestled in their drawing room libraries, they were quick to give Uncle Sam the benefit of the doubt. The distance between Aug. 2 and the madness that was Jan. 15, they contemplated, could never be traversed by a culture that had prided itself in maintaining an attitude of healthy skepticism, which translated into a meticulous attention to detail and a thorough checking of all sides of the most routine issues before embarking on any course of action. That culture was way past the jungle days of the colonialism of the first part of this century. As the crisis was heading towards its climax, many of those disciples argued, rather chivalrously, that the whole thing could turn out for the best of everyone concerned.

But alas! Before they knew it, they were being treated to a rare display of those "United Nations" at work. Instantly, the Middle East had exploded into a vast psychiatric ward, with the psychopaths this time determining their individual courses of treatment.

First it was Joseph Sisco, former U.S. under secretary of state. Minutes after Iraq had announced its unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait, he told the BBC that the withdrawal was unacceptable because it "rewarded the aggressor." When a third participant in the programme commented that he couldn't

understand how this could be so, adding that he hoped there was no "hidden agenda," Sisco retorted that he was sorry his interlocutor could not understand. "You see," he continued, "the American people need some real victory to get over Vietnam." George Bush repeated the same idea in a rather vulgar manner when he later said, "we've kicked the Vietnam thing."

The mood was no less vindictive on the other side of the Atlantic. With the memories of the downfall of the Empire still lingering in their minds, many erstwhile composed Britons, some of whom had settled for the underpaid job of teacher of English in alien and hostile cultures (in lieu of "High Commissioner," or some other respectable colonial position) grabbed the Gulf crisis as a golden opportunity to get back at those Third World bastards. The foreshadowing had been successfully staged in the Falkland Islands. Now was the moment for the climax. John Major was coming very close to being an iron lady!

It takes only one mad man to create a bedlam. Not to be left out, some European states jumped on the bandwagon with dreams of wealth, grandeur and purgation.

The Arab theatre was no less dramatic. The Gulf states, after a prolonged period of treatment like rich old sisters, were now fully equipped to make their point. The new upstarts should clearly understand that the days of Nasser were over; that they, the Gulf states, were prepared to ally themselves not only with the

devil, but with what is worse, to counteract their brethren's incessant bullying. And consequently could go to hell!

The Kuwaitis had to wait until the war was over to do their psychiatric treatment. Sophisticated and international in their outlook, they could understand, with amazing detachment, all the inferno of human frailty, and they had an ingenious remedy for each anomaly. Thus military occupation was always a possibility, but could be circumvented by having, at any given moment, half their fellow citizens stationed abroad. The other half could flee if necessary, giving the aggressor the shock of his life: a country stacked with expatriates! By the same reasoning, the economy could be safeguarded against external threat by transplanting it, lock stock and barrel, to the safety of overseas investment.

The Kuwaitis had tolerated expatriate superiority in practically all walks of life, sometimes including financial superiority. But sure enough, they always managed to produce an original device up their sleeves. Thus student evaluation at school had two yardsticks, one for Kuwaitis, and the other for expatriates. Accordingly, as a Kuwaiti you could in theory fail all your courses and rank first on the Kuwaiti scale. Admission to the University of Kuwait had been heavily biased in favour of the Kuwaiti scale.

On the adult level, the Kuwaitis had been deeply hurt to see expatriates come in with Ph.D.s in subjects you and I had never heard of; they were tor-

mented to hear their women say that expatriate mechanics were so damn good.

But this was all understandable, and the feudal system was left virtually unscathed, a nicely going concern. Then came Iraqi occupation, and with it the announcement that the Iraqi occupation authorities were considering extending the privilege of sponsoring expatriate labour to some Arab groups. Of the motley of expatriate navvies, the Palestinians were accused with a specific mentioning in this regard. Yes, the Palestinians who had sent many a shrink to the unemployment line by willingly posing as self-proclaimed scapegoats for the ills of the petrodollar world.

The spectre of the Palestinians changing ranks, from vassal to lord, threw the Kuwaitis off-balance. For watching the subhumanity that was the expatriate working force wriggling with agony was the sin qua non of the whole enterprise. Otherwise, you could always join your capital abroad and live happily ever after. Consequently, the Kuwaitis comprehended the full extent of their psychosis, and decided they required the most in-depth treatment. Then they showed up on TV screens as dark plump little figures, the product of years of malnutrition, of scavenging on anything petrodollars could import: from Coca-Cola to Mars chocolate bars. And yes, clad in warm-up suits, they were toting machine guns and berding the expatriates, mostly Palestinians, to torture and death. Details of their madness have been well documented by independent in-

ternational groups.

It is puzzling why the United Nations have bothered at all to polish their image in the wake of the Gulf war. Presumably this has been just a carry over from pre-war international order days, when you were concerned about being edged off because you were an imperialist or such. In principle, the United Nations could move in anywhere they wished nowadays, even to maintain local law and order. And if you didn't like it they could always bomb you out of existence. With this new arrangement in mind, they can safely scrape off all their "information centres" and other image-enhancing facilities at no cost to their international standing.

But polish their image they did start at a frantic rate right after the war. Ironically enough, it was the Palestinians who have been utilised towards that end. The United Nations have done their homework remarkably well. They have run through the revolutionary communiques and other Arab statements and were relieved to find that the commitment to the "legitimate rights" of the Palestinians has run through these communiques like a litany. (Never mind the fact that some of the new pravins could not correctly indicate Palestine on the map). More amazing was the fact that the Palestinians, out of utter desperation, have been easily taken in by the rhetoric of the communiques. The Palestinians, always handy and expendable, mused the United Nations, now should suddenly deserve a just

and lasting peace.

And the band played with sickening dissonance. Local Palestinian "leaders" suddenly cropped up, and were quick to be seen shaking hands with you-know-who and dying to have close TV shots with him, despite the fact that those hands were still dripping with innocent Iraqi blood. (I have had visions of this last sentence having a ring along the lines of "The emperor has no clothes," but I promptly recomposed myself. With the lessons of the recent events still in mind I quickly remembered that properly attired humanity is becoming a rare species indeed).

By authorising those "leaders" to act in this shameful manner, the PLO has provided some of its critics with the ammunition they were looking for. The question of whether the PLO has lost sight of the delicate distinction between flexibility and giving up on fundamental principles has immediately jumped to the foreground.

And what now? As I wake up to the serenity of these beautiful spring days, I feel pleasantly reassured. I get visions of this "Middle East" towering like a happy giant, bemused by the sight of the disciples of Western culture scurrying for cover, with their copies of "Hamlet" concealed like contraband. Messages from our heritage have it that the psychiatric treatment has served only to aggravate the internal aberrations of the "United Nations." The plastic surgery has rendered the ugly "United Nations" still uglier.

Jordan, Syria coordinate positions

(Continued from page 1)

have been the focus of talks. President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt was due in Damascus Sunday for similar talks with Mr. Assad, officials said.

The Egyptian leader has been on a European tour.

Mr. Baker wound up his fourth mission to the region in two months on Thursday. He returned to Washington from Israel after failing to achieve a breakthrough on talks.

But he and U.S. President George Bush said some progress had been achieved and the peace drive was still alive.

Syrian newspapers Saturday repeated calls by Damascus for a significant U.N. role in any peace talks.

There is no doubt that the U.N. which adopted several resolutions on peace in the region could contribute effectively in (solving) this issue because it constitutes the general framework which is capable of pushing peace efforts on the right direction," the official said.

"This does not mean (we are) underestimating the effectiveness of the two superpowers and their joint efforts to achieve peace in the region. On the contrary, they

should back these efforts."

Tishreen accused Israel's right-wing Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir of not wanting peace.

"What Shamir and other Israeli leaders say about peace efforts show those people do not want peace. Or they want the peace on their own style which means a continuation of occupation and aggression against Arabs," Tishreen said.

"When Shamir repeats that Jerusalem is an eternal capital of his entity and that there is no role for the U.N. or the Europeans in peace talks this means he does not want peace."

President Bush Friday promised to "keep on plugging" for a Mideast peace conference, but officials say there are no plans for Secretary Baker to make another trip to the region.

A tired-looking Baker on Friday reported to Mr. Bush about his latest mission.

Putting the best face on a trip that failed to produce a breakthrough, Mr. Bush told reporters, "there is real cause for optimism" despite stubborn differences between Israel and Syria.

The president brushed aside speculation that he might invite Arab and Israeli leaders to Washington to see if the deadlock could be broken. "That's a detail

I'm not discussing," he said.

The president said he would send Mr. Baker back to the Middle East "if there's reason to go back."

An administration official said that there are no plans for Mr. Baker to make another trip and that the next step is to await responses on issues Mr. Baker left with the parties.

Despite Mr. Bush's optimism, the official, who requested anonymity, said the president wanted to convey "a sense of reality that this is a long-term process. It won't be settled overnight."

Mr. Bush said Mr. Baker was dealing with a very difficult dilemma.

"And we will continue to work this process," the president said. "We're not about to stop... and when you're working a problem this complicated, you just keep on plugging away."

Like Mr. Baker, Mr. Bush refused to discuss any proposals put forward by the United States, saying that quiet diplomacy was in order.

He did not explain his reasons for optimism except to point to a declaration by Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states that they would send an observer to a peace conference.

Economist striving for Third World cohesion

By Jon Miller

MANILA, The Philippines — Gamani Corea, renowned among economists for his views on international trade, speaks with the cultured precision of a Cambridge professor. But he has a stern warning for the wealthy countries of the world.

"The poor are not content to remain where they are, even if others think they should be more patient," cautions the 65-year-old Sri Lanka native. "There is a tremendous groundswell from below. Young people are coming into the labour market, with new aspirations, new expectations, and the governments are going to be under pressure to respond. And if they fail to do so adequately, there will be tensions. These tensions can take all kinds of forms — even violent forms."

That spells trouble not just for the poor countries, but for the rich countries as well. Cross-border terrorism, environmental degradation and mass migration are all results of failing Third World economies. "You simply cannot envisage a stable world order if the Third World is in turmoil," Corea concludes.

it's enormously revolutionary in concept. In fact, in the earlier days, what I've been saying was widely expressed in international circles."

Corea first rose to prominence in the 1970s, when as Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) he called on the Third World to look for lessons in the oil price shock engineered by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). His idea was that the world economy depends on many of the basic commodities produced by developing countries, but that those commodities are rarely valued highly enough.

doesn't always work the way the textbook says it should work. The textbook says that when prices fall, supplies contract and correct the prices spontaneously. In fact, often you get the opposite reaction. When prices fall, people produce more in order to keep their total earnings up."

That, Corea asserts, is bad news for both producers and consumers. "The alternatives are either that the commodity markets remain depressed and in the doldrums, with all that implies for the producer countries or the producers get together in order to do some degree of supply management."

As head of UNCTAD, Corea promoted what was called the "North-South dialogue," designed to acquaint rich countries with the perspectives of poor countries, and vice versa. In the process, Corea transformed UNCTAD into an activist agency that sought to give voice to Third World concerns. But the North-South dialogue of the 1970s and 1980s was never a balanced one, largely because the poor countries had little success in coming up with a coherent agenda. It became clear that a South-South dialogue was a necessary first step.

"Most primary products are not as crucial as oil, but they are in demand, and they are bought and sold today. What I'm saying really is not that we should get together and jack up prices just so we can extract a bit more money from the rich. But there is a tendency for all these products to be in oversupply in the world markets, and the market mechanism itself doesn't always work the way the textbook says it should work. When prices fall, supplies contract and correct the prices spontaneously. In fact, often you get the opposite reaction. When prices fall, people produce more in order to keep their total earnings up."

"Most primary products are not as crucial as oil, but they are in demand, and they are bought and sold today," he explains.

"What I'm saying really is not that we should get together and jack up prices just so we can extract a bit more money from the rich. But there is a tendency for all these products to be in oversupply in the world markets, and the market mechanism itself



Gamani Corea, renowned international economist, warns that turmoil will ensue unless Third World countries learn to cooperate to enable them to compete in world markets.

Aligned Movement, organisations of poor countries that have, Corea thinks, often resorted to rhetoric or inactivity when consensus proved to be too difficult to achieve.

His idea is for a streamlined group devoted to nuts-and-bolts negotiation. "The purpose of a Third World secretariat," he says, "is to take the negotiating process to a higher degree of competence, to improve its quality."

A stronger Third World, Corea maintains, is ultimately in the interest of the First World. He points not just to the creation of new markets and new trading partners, but to the unhealthy consequences of continued poverty and stagnation. "It's good to be alive to the danger of unrest and failed expectations in the developing world," he warns.

Corea rejects the idea that the Third World wants to use the threat of unrest as a bargaining chip, however. "The Third World does not want to harm itself in order to harm the North," he says. While he acknowledges that domestic policies are extremely important in determining a country's economic success, he thinks the external economic environment plays an even bigger role. And it is the wealthy countries, through effective negotiation and control of key resources, that write the rules for the global system.

Corea says the Third World must ultimately accept responsibility for its inability to get itself organised. The lack of a common stance on debt reduction is an example of where the developing countries have failed to unite, despite common interests. "There is no lack of opportunities for the creditors to come together and exchange views and forge common approaches," he says, "but there doesn't seem to be any opportunity created by the debtors. And for that, the debtors themselves must take the blame."

"Nobody is today raising their voice and saying that the developed countries are not performing well in managing the world economy," he adds — World News Link.

Barzani reports accord

(Continued from page 1)

feud which has lasted too long for the Kurdish people and for the Iraqi people as a whole," Mr. Barzani said.

He said it might be better to reach agreement with the government on control of Kirkuk rather than put the issue to a census to determine whether the area had a Kurdish majority.

The 1970 accord provided for a census to define the Kurdish autonomous region but was never carried out.

Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, told Reuters Tuesday that instead of a slice of the oil revenues from Kirkuk, the Kurds wanted a share of the state budget equal to their population — about 20 per cent of Iraq's 18 million people.

The Kurdish guerrillas have conducted talks with a government team headed by President Saddam's deputy on the ruling Revolution Command Council, Izzat Ibrahim, as well as Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz and Interior Minister Ali Hassan Al Majied.

Asked why he trusted the government following its crushing of the rebellion, Mr. Barzani said: "Both of us have now got very strong experience that war is not the solution to this matter."

The Iraqi News Agency reported that in reply to a question on the possible disarming of Peshmerga fighters, Mr. Barzani said: "The Peshmerga will be part of the Iraqi forces and perhaps serve in the internal security force."

"We are part of the Iraqi people and our organisation will be part of Iraqi organisations," he added.

Mr. Barzani stressed that the 1970 accord was "the basis of all ideas discussed so far," the agency said.

"All these are principle agreements. We are still negotiating," Mr. Barzani said. "Nothing has been signed or finalised, but a broad agreement has been reached on these matters."

He told reporters here that under the 20-point tentative agreement, Iraqi officials had agreed to a general amnesty, repatriation of Kurdish refugees, rescinding of emergency laws, a "crash plan for developing the Kurdish area" and the opening of a new Kurdish university.

Mr. Barzani said the Iraqi leadership had agreed to a coalition government for Iraq, and other rebel leaders accompanying Mr. Barzani said the percentage of Kurds in a new government would be in proportion to their population.

The coalition government, under the plan, would not include existing Shiite Muslim parties, the rebels said.

The Kurds said the interests of Shiite, 55 per cent of the population, would be assured by democracy.

The question of a census to determine the Kurdish population remained a negotiating point, Kurdish leaders said.

Kurdish leaders claim they represent more than 30 per cent of Iraq's population. Most estimates put it at 20 to 25 per cent.

"The ultimate judge is the census," said Sami Abdul Rahman of the Kurdish Democratic Peoples Party.

Shamir reaffirms rejection

(Continued from page 1)

told reporters.

French officials said Mr. Mitterrand agreed that the U.N. should be involved, one way or another.

Mr. Mubarak also said that a European presence in peace talks was essential despite Israeli reservations.

Mr. Mubarak said those interested in promoting peace should move quickly because diplomacy might be more difficult during the U.S. presidential campaign next year.

The main obstacle at present was the "intransigence" of Mr. Shamir, Mr. Mubarak said. He expressed regret that Israel had

balked at endorsing European participation in Arab-Israeli talks.

"Given the proximity of Europe to the Middle East, and the excellent relations which it has with countries in the region, it is essential that Europe be present in the peace process," Mr. Mubarak said.

Mr. Mubarak said it didn't matter to him whether a peace conference was structured as regional or international.

"What matters is what emerges from it," he said.

Mr. Mubarak stopped in Italy and Luxembourg en route to Paris and plans visits to Turkey, Syria and Libya before returning home.

United Nations to post guards

(Continued from page 1)

forces. It is a deployment of U.N. guards to create a climate of assurance."

Mr. Bernander said the guards were U.N. staff and not contributed by member nations.

Iraq has rejected a British proposal for a United Nations police force to replace U.S. and allied troops in northern Iraq.

Mr. Bernander said he had discussed the deployment with Kurdish rebel leaders negotiating

an autonomy agreement in Baghdad. "They appreciate any U.N. presence in that area," he said.

Mr. Bernander said the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council had been informed of progress in the negotiations with Baghdad on the guard force.

He said he did not know whether the deployment would lead to a withdrawal of Western forces from the area but said he believed it would have an effect on allied decision making.

U.N. report says more data needed

(Continued from page 1)

weapons sites. It recommends setting up a field office in Bahrain.

A technical team of 34 members, headed by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Chief Inspector Dimitri Pericos, arrived in Iraq on Wednesday to examine what is left of the country's nuclear facilities.

The team carried out a survey of the large nuclear research facility of Tuwaitha, south of Baghdad, which was heavily damaged during the allied bombing during the war. The site contained a French nuclear research reactor and a Soviet research reactor.

Iraq says it has no nuclear weapons, but the United States and other countries have argued it is developing nuclear arms.

The special commission is expected later to send a second verification team to inspect chemical weapons production and storage sites.

The Security Council also was to set up a compensation fund next week to pay victims of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. The fund covers individuals, corporations, governments and damage to the environment.

Iraq's detention of a British charged with spying has complicated the prospects of the Security Council's lifting sanctions against Iraq or allowing it to export oil.

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Financial Markets

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Date: 16/5/91	New York Close Date: 17/5/91
Sterling Pound	1.7505	1.7110
Deutsche Mark	1.6940	1.7385
Swiss Franc	1.4370	1.4700
French Franc	5.7460	5.5585
Japanese Yen	157.45	158.35
European Currency Unit	1.2160	1.1830

European Currency Unit

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.87	5.93	6.12	6.56
Sterling Pound	11.81	11.37	11.12	11.00
Deutsche Mark	8.75	8.87	9.00	9.06
Swiss Franc	6.06	6.12	6.12	7.61
French Franc	9.00	9.00	9.06	9.12
Japanese Yen	7.84	7.71	7.59	7.40
European Currency Unit	9.71	9.43	9.46	9.43

Precious Metals

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	355.15	6.70	Silver	4.02	.087

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	.682	.684
Sterling Pound	1.1656	1.1708
Deutsche Mark	.3914	.3934
Swiss Franc	.4628	.4651
French Franc	.1154	.1160
Japanese Yen	.4921	.4946
Dutch Guilder	.3475	.3492
Swedish Krona	.1094	.1099
Italian Lira	.0527	.0526
Belgian Franc	.01908	.01916

Other Currencies

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.7450	1.7660
Lebanese Lira	.074	.076
Saudi Riyal	.1813	.1825
Kuwaiti Dinar	.71	.71
Qatari Riyal	.1835	.1845
Egyptian Pound	.1900	.2100
Omani Riyal	1.7300	1.7450
UAE Dirham	.1835	.2100
Greek Drachma	.3550	.3700
Cypriot Pound	1.4250	1.4350

CAB Indices for Amman Financial Market

Index	16/5/1991 Close	15/5/1991 Close
All-Share	113.53	113.24
Banking Sector	109.98	109.52
Insurance Sector	111.30	112.06
Industry Sector	118.20	112.06
Services Sector	122.71	123.39

Survey shows huge OPEC windfall due to Gulf crisis

BASEL, Switzerland (AP) — Profiting from the surge in crude prices caused by the Gulf crisis, the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries, increased their Western bank deposits by a record \$21.5 billion in the last quarter of 1990, a survey has said.

But the crisis and weaker economies in many countries slowed the overall pace of international banking last September-December, the quarterly report by the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) said.

It said Gulf OPEC members initially drew down their Western accounts after Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait, which touched off the crisis.

But the ensuing steep rise in oil prices was a "major factor" in a huge net inflow into Western banks from outside industrialised countries in the last three months of the year, BIS analysts said.

Saudi Arabia, top producer in the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries, increased its bank assets by \$2.7 billion. That turned the South American country from a net debtor to a net creditor of Western banks, BIS said.

Algeria and Nigeria, both OPEC members, also paid back some of their credits and increased deposits slightly.

OPEC's 13 member countries increased their total Western bank assets by \$26.3 billion after drawing them down by \$8.3 billion in the first nine months of

last year, BIS said.

Overall, the banking business slowed in the last quarter. International claims by Western banks rose \$168 billion, down nearly 55 per cent from the previous quarter, the survey said.

Business with eastern Europe, slowed further, it said.

But China sent \$5.4 billion in new deposits to banks in industrialised countries and borrowed \$3.5 billion, raising its net creditor position to \$9 billion.

Taiwan added \$4.9 billion to its balances, BIS said.

South Korea and Thailand, hit by the oil price rise, drew down their deposits and also borrowed more, the survey said.

Basel-based BIS, drawing on central bank data, reports on banks in 17 major Western industrialised countries and several offshore banking centres.

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OECD experts say world economy poised to recover

PARIS (R) — The industrial world is starting to pull out of the economic downturn induced by the Gulf crisis and the recovery will accelerate as the year wears on, experts at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) say.

Projections discussed by the experts in Paris this week herald a pick-up in growth in the 24 rich nations that make up the OECD to 2.9 per cent in 1992 from only one per cent this year, economic diplomats familiar with the talks said Friday.

Nearly all of 1991's increase in output will be squeezed into the second half of the year.

Inflation, an indicator that tends to lag output trends, is expected to ease to about 3.8 per cent in 1992 despite the rebound in the economy. Prices this year are projected to rise around 4.4 per cent.

The outlook was discussed in preparation for a meeting next week of the OECD's economic policy committee, whose findings will in turn be debated by finance and trade ministers at the agency's annual meeting in Paris on

June 4 and 5.

One diplomat said an unusual degree of consensus emerged at the talks. "There's nothing to prevent a recovery," he said. "The only question is one of timing."

Even on this score, he said, about two-thirds of the delegates took the view that growth in the OECD as a whole would probably resume this quarter, albeit at a slow pace. The others saw a recovery delayed until the second half.

The OECD projection of 2.9 per cent growth for 1992 is close to that of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The IMF's latest world economic outlook, released last month, forecast growth in industrial countries would accelerate to 2.8 per cent next year from 1.3 per cent this year.

"The situation doesn't look too unsatisfactory. There are no major disequilibria," one source said.

Because of massive transfers from the Gulf states, Japan and Germany to the United States to help defray the cost of the Gulf

war, the OECD believes this year's U.S. current account deficit could be considerably lower than the much-reduced gap of \$40 billion estimated by the U.S. Treasury, he said.

Although a recovery in confidence since the end of the war has brightened the economic outlook, diplomats expect Washington to keep pressing for lower global interest rates.

The U.S. Treasury warned Thursday that the persistence of high real interest rates posed substantial risks for the world economy by hurting investment and growth prospects.

This view was roundly rejected by Japan, Germany and Britain at last month's Group of Seven finance ministers' meeting in Washington. It is also unpopular with some OECD experts, who say fresh interest rate cuts at a time when the economy is already recovering could stoke inflation to dangerously high levels.

One said the inflation rate of nearly four per cent projected for 1992 would have been unacceptable high to many central banks not long ago.

Pope calls for changes in world economic order

VATICAN CITY (R) — Pope John Paul said Saturday the gap between rich and poor nations was the greatest source of world conflict now communism had collapsed.

"Since the decline of the ideological contrasts which have divided the world for most of this century, the asymmetry between rich and poor nations is now certainly the most threatening source of conflict among peoples," he said.

The Pontiff, addressing the new Philippine ambassador to the Vatican, Oscar Villalobos, called for changes in the world economic order.

"In order to prevent this imbalance between the developed and developing societies from remain-

ing a chronic source of tension, the international community must make adequate adjustments in its economic and social systems and priorities," he said.

Advanced nations, with a minority of the world's population, were using a disproportionate part of the earth's resources while contributing inadequately to the development of the rest of humanity, he said.

Speaking on his 71st birthday, the Polish Pontiff called on the international community to resolve the problem of the Third World debt.

"The seriousness of the situation cannot be ignored," he said. Throughout his 13 years as Pontiff, the Pope has made it a priority to remind wealthy na-

tions of their duty to the rest of the world.

In an encyclical earlier this month, he said developing and underdeveloped countries should pay their debts but advanced countries could not demand payment when it meant inflicting a lower living standard on the debtor nation.

and furniture.

Sales abroad of American-made products went up by a slim 1.2 per cent to \$33.99 billion in March.

Private economists applauded the smaller trade deficit, but they cautioned that it may prove fleeting because economic recovery could quickly lead to higher demand for imports and overwhelm growth in export sales.

"These numbers are believable because the export improvement is in line with what we've seen in the past and lower imports are consistent with recession," said Russ Sheldon, an economist with Mellon Bank in Pittsburgh.

"But it's likely to be temporary because if there's economic recovery imports are going to come back very quickly," he said.

Commerce Secretary Robert Mosbacher said U.S. exporters should continue benefiting from emerging markets in eastern Europe and Latin America and the possibility of a North America,

free trade zone bringing Mexico into a U.S.-Canada trade pact.

"While economic growth overseas has slowed, American industry clearly is building market share abroad through renewed commitment to quality and to the expansion of international markets," Mosbacher said.

The record for monthly exports was set last October at \$34.68 billion. January exports also were higher than March's at \$34.14 billion.

Promoting export growth is vital to the nation's economic recovery, said a spokesman for the National Association of Manufacturers.

"The strong export performance contributing to the March drop in the U.S. trade deficit must continue if we are to pull out of recession soon," said Stephen Cooney, the association's director of international investment.



Pope John Paul

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free trade zone bringing Mexico into a U.S.-Canada trade pact.

Egypt gets IMF loan

WASHINGTON (R) — The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said Friday that it approved a \$372 million loan for Egypt to help the Middle Eastern country carry out tough economic reforms.

The credit pact, reached after three years of at times acrimonious negotiations, is expected to pave the way for a steep reduction in Egypt's \$35 billion in foreign debt.

In return for the 18-month IMF loan, Egypt agreed to overhaul its economy, slashing its budget deficit, freeing oil and other prices and deregulating its farming sector.

"The Egyptian government... has decided to accelerate its economic reform programme," the IMF said.

The IMF said that Egypt will create a social fund financed mainly by foreign money to shelter its neediest groups from the impact of the economic reforms and to help resettle workers displaced by the Gulf war.

The country has been hard hit by the financial fallout from the Gulf crisis, losing export and other revenue from the ban on trade with Iraq and the war.

Partly under prodding from the IMF, Egypt has moved rapidly towards a free market economy over the past four months after 30 years of central planning.

It has raised domestic energy prices and introduced a 10 per cent sales tax to reduce its budget deficit, a key IMF demand before an accord could be signed.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak will start a five-nation European tour next week to try to translate the IMF agreement into a significant reduction in Egypt's foreign debt.

But President Mubarak would like quicker relief.

"President Mubarak told me of his concerns," Beregovoy told newsmen after a 45-minute meeting. "He'd like the same treatment as Poland, but with a timetable that is perhaps a bit shorter."

The Paris Club holds \$27 billion of Egypt's \$35 billion debt. It will discuss the problem next Thursday and Friday.

The Group of Seven industrial nations have already agreed in principle to grant Cairo the same generous terms as Poland as a reward for its role on the allied side in the war against Iraq.

Beregovoy said he would back President Mubarak's case but indicated some Paris Club creditors could take some persuading. Japan was especially reluctant to approve the Polish deal, officials said.

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Thousands of Albanians back strike

VIENNA (R) — Tens of thousands of Albanians chanting slogans against the communist government marched through the capital Tirana Saturday, the third day of a general strike, opposition sources said.

The sources, from the main opposition Democratic Party, said some 6,000 strikers chanting "down with the government" gathered at the capital's disused airport and marched to the city centre where they were joined by large crowds of townspeople.

Similar demonstrations were reported in towns across Albania. Saturday, a normal working day in Albania, was the third day of a general strike called by the country's independent trade union federation to press economic and political demands.

The federation is calling for wage increases of between 50 and 100 per cent for most workers. Union officials say 250,000 workers have joined the strike, which has paralysed transport and most factories.

Albania, with Europe's most backward economy, has been swept by political and social unrest as it emerges from nearly half a century of Stalinist isolation.

Communist President Ramiz Alia, who met strike leaders Thursday, said their economic demands were legitimate, but warned that the country was in a dangerous situation.

"The economic requests are just, but I want to say...that the situation we are undergoing is not only grave but dangerous as well," the state news agency ATA quoted President Alia as saying.

Government sources, speaking by telephone from Tirana, confirmed that Saturday's demonstrations in the capital had passed peacefully and said the government was likely to seek further talks with union leaders.

The sources added that workers at state radio and television staged a one-hour strike Saturday, to demand a 50 per cent wage increase.

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Cinema **PHILADELPHIA** Tel: 634144
HER ALIPI
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Cinema **NIJOM** Tel: 675571
Fifi Abdo / Adel Adham
Mahmoud Al Jundi
NOOR AL UYOON
Show: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Cinema **RAINBOW** Tel: 625155
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Seoul mourners attack journalists

Protesters mark anniversary of S. Korean uprising with clashes

SEOUL (AP) — About 30,000 students, many hurling firebombs and rocks, fought riot police and paralysed downtown Seoul Saturday when police blocked them from staging final rites for a slain student. Two students set themselves on fire in anti-government protests, and one died.

The marchers started a street sit-down for about five hours, then agreed to hold final roadside rites at a new location.

In the city centre, helmeted riot police closed main boulevards and shops as at least 12,000 students poured into the streets waving banners, chanting anti-government slogans and hurling firebombs.

Two people set themselves on fire earlier Saturday at ceremonies marking the anniversary of the Kwangju uprising, the bloodiest anti-government action in modern Korean history.

In Seoul, a woman doused herself with paint thinner, set herself on fire and jumped from an elevated railroad track. The woman, identified as Lee Jung-Soon, 39, a student at Seoul's Yonsei University, died after being rushed to a nearby hospital.

In southern South Korea, Kim Chul-Soo, 19, poured paint thinner on himself and set himself ablaze in his high school classroom after ceremonies marking the anniversary of the Kwangju uprising. He was in critical condition.

The self-immolation brings to seven the number of protesters who have set themselves ablaze in the three weeks since the fatal beating of a student by police. Five have died.

Police were deployed nationwide and military troops in Seoul were on high alert as militant student, dissident and labour groups vowed to intensify anti-government protests touched off by the beating death of Kang Kyung-Dae, 20, on April 26 by police after a demonstration at Seoul's Myungji University.

The national dissident Labour Council said 90,000 of its workers in 138 unions in 14 cities staged one-day strikes. The Federation of Industrial Unions claimed about 340,000 people staged partial or one-day sympathy strikes. The numbers could not be verified.

In Kwangju, 262 kilometres south of Seoul more than 20,000

mourners prayed and bowed before the graves of some of the people killed in the 1980 uprising. About 200 people died and thousands were hurt over a ten-day period that year when security forces fired at civilians to disperse hundreds of thousands of protesters. The bloodletting so deeply affected the Korean psyche that its anniversary is an annual occasion for anti-government violence.

Elderly mothers, dressed in long traditional white mourning robes, waited in front of graves of sons killed in the uprising.

Other mourners placed fruit and drinks on the graves and burned scented candles to honour those killed. Pictures of the dead, mostly young students, were fixed in front of many of the graves.

In Seoul, protesters attacked with iron pipes and clubs some photographers and television crews shooting pictures of the woman who set herself on fire just as the funeral march was starting.

A soundman and cameraman working for the U.S.-based Cable

News Network were hospitalised with several internal injuries, the network said. Associated Press photographer Itsum Inouye was punched and kicked.

President Roh Tae-Woo warned against street violence and the government charged that subversive pro-Communist groups were behind escalating unrest which has created the most serious political crisis in four years.

Police issued warrants Saturday for the arrest of about 100 dissident and student leaders on charges of leading violent protests triggered by Kang's death.

Police said the uprising leaders would be rounded up after Kang's funeral procession and burial.

Roh fired the minister in charge of police to placate protesters after Kang's killing. Five police officers have been charged in the death.

Dissident students, workers and opposition politicians say that isn't enough and demand the resignation of the cabinet, the arrest of the former minister and the national police chief.

ANC suspends talks with De Klerk

JOHANNESBURG (R) — The African National Congress (ANC) Saturday suspended power-sharing talks with President F.W. De Klerk's white government.

An ANC statement said it would shelve political settlement talks until De Klerk met the demands in its ultimatum last month for action to end black township violence that has claimed about 800 lives this year.

"Until such time as progress is made in regard to these demands, the ANC will not involve itself in constitutional discussions with the government or in any all-party congress to discuss mechanisms for drawing up a new constitution," the statement said.

The ANC statement, read by Secretary General Alfred Nzo, said it would launch nationwide consumer boycotts, a one-day national strike and mass demonstrations on June 15 to press its demands.

"Unless the government and other parties implicated in the violence address this threat seriously by moving beyond rhetoric and posturing, unless they begin to take concrete and binding measures to end the violence, all South Africans will be losers," the ANC said.

Major accuses Labour of waging campaign of lies

PETERBOROUGH, England (AP) — Prime Minister John Major, smarting from the third electoral setback since he took office in November, accused the opposition Labour Party of waging a campaign of lies.

Labour whipped the governing party in a by-election Thursday in the Welsh district of Monmouth, which had been controlled by the Conservatives for 25 years.

The result appeared to rule out any prospect of Major calling a general election next month, a year before the government's five-year term expires.

Labour candidate Huw Edwards, 38, a college lecturer, received 17,732 votes. Tory candidate Roger Evans, a 44-year-old lawyer from London, polled 15,327.

The candidate of the centrist Liberal Democratic Party, schoolteacher Frances David, 58, received 11,164 votes. The Tory candidate had won by 9,340 votes in the last parliamentary election.

In Monmouth, Labour focused its campaign on a government plan to shakeup Britain's free National Health Service, which the Conservatives say is meant to improve efficiency.

However, Labour said the new policy of allowing state-funded hospitals to be run by trustees would remove the institutions from the health service.

"It was a carefully prepared, carefully scripted lie," Major told reporters during a visit to Peterborough in central England.

Labour Party leaders said the victory marked a turning point for their party after 12 years of Conservative rule.

"It is a government which has run out of time and run out of



John Major

trust." Labour leader Neil Kinnock told a party rally in the Welsh town of Llandudno Friday evening.

The Conservatives, or Tories, had fought hard to save the Welsh parliamentary district, which they controlled since 1966. Turnout was high — 76 per cent — in Thursday's voting.

The election, caused by the death of the previous legislator, came two weeks after the Tories lost nearly one-fifth of their seats to opposition parties in local government elections in England and Wales. The Conservatives also lost the only other by-election held since December in a district that had been considered a Tory stronghold.

The Conservatives' big majority in the 650-member House of Commons has scarcely been denoted by the by-elections, however.

Before the voting in Monmouth, the Conservatives had 371 seats, Labour 229 and the Liberal Democrats 21. The rest were held by minority regional parties.



Mexican becomes New Miss Universe

LAS VEGAS (R) — Lapita Jones of Mexico, competing against 72 women from around the world, won the Miss Universe title at the pageant's 40th annual competition. Jones, 25, replaced Norway's Mona Grudt, who won the title last year. The Mexican received the loudest ovation from 7,500 people attending the two-hour gala held in this Nevada gambling resort city. Pauline Huizinga of the Netherlands came second and Yulia Lemigova of the Soviet Union third. Siobhan McCafferty of Ireland won the most photogenic category, Monique Lindesay of the U.S. Virgin Islands the most congenial and Miribel Gutierrez of Colombia was picked for best national costume. Representatives from 73 countries, including first-time entries from Bulgaria and Romania, competed in the event, which was televised to more than 600 million viewers in 60 countries.

Couple marries nearly 50 years after engagement

HAMILTON, New Jersey (AP) — A wartime romance between a U.S. Marine and a New Zealand woman has endured the test of time to end in marriage nearly 50 years after the couple were engaged. Bob Zurn, 71, and Joan Calder, 69, were married Thursday in Morrisville, on New Zealand's North Island, sealing their engagement of 1943. The couple met when Zurn was in Wellington on leave from the Second Division of the U.S. Marine Corps. Ms. Calder was a university student and part of a wartime entertainment troupe. The couple became engaged, but Zurn was suddenly called back into combat in World War II. After he returned to the United States, they drifted apart and formed happy marriages with other partners. Zurn, who became a widower three years ago, put an appeal over an Auckland radio station in March to find his former sweetheart. After making contact with Ms. Calder, who was widowed six years ago, he flew to New Zealand. He arrived on the evening of April 19 and proposed the next day. Ms. Calder believes it was the poignancy of first love that drew them back together nearly 50 years later. "There was something there that we never really forgot," she said.

Menem's Ferrari fails to find bidders

BUENOS AIRES (AP) — President Carlos Menem's bright red Ferrari, a gift of Italian businessmen, went on the block — and stayed there when the public failed to bid. A base price equivalent to \$120,000 had been set for the Ferrari 348 TB Rosso Corsa at the weekly auction at the Banco Ciudad, where the car had been on display for ten days. Auctioneer Jorge Brusco's energetic appeals were met with silence by the public and he was obliged to cancel the auction. Bank manager Armando Suello earlier had predicted a quick sale for the car, which has become known as "the presidential Ferrari," and anticipated a winning bid topping \$200,000. A law bars the president from accepting gifts while in office and Menem agreed to sell it. The proceeds were to have gone to a special government social welfare fund.

Syphilis epidemic continues in U.S.

ATLANTA (R) — The worst epidemic of syphilis recorded in U.S. history continued unchecked during 1990, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reported. In its weekly report on diseases, CDC said the number of primary and secondary syphilis cases diagnosed last year increased nine per cent over 1989. Moreover, the current level of syphilis in the general population, 20 cases per 100,000 people, was the highest since 1949. Syphilis had been on the decline in the United States until 1985, when a decades-long trend suddenly reversed itself. Most researchers have said syphilis is rising because of the increasing number of people willing to trade sex for drugs, particularly crack cocaine. But Dr. Ruth Ann Dunn, a CDC medical epidemiologist, said she was not certain the rise was related to drugs. "It's been easy to blame it on crack cocaine since it became available in the early 1980s. But a minority of the people we studied actually were crack users," Dunn called the current epidemic, "the largest increase since we started keeping records in 1941."

9 die as India's poll campaign ends

NEW DELHI (R) — At least nine people, including two candidates, were killed as campaigning ended for the first stage of India's general election Monday.

Under Indian law, campaigning stops two days before the start of voting. The deaths were recorded in violence over the last 24 hours of the electoral battle.

Election Commission officials said they spent \$75 million organising the world's biggest election and would use elephants, camels and helicopters to ferry ballot boxes for 514 million voters throughout the country.

The election follows the resignation in March of Prime Minister Chandrab Sekhar, the third man to quit the leadership of the most populous democracy in 16 months.

In Punjab, Sikh separatists killed

a former state government minister Friday night in a renewed attack on candidates, senior police superintendent Sanjiv Gupta said.

Gupta said six militants pulled state assembly candidate Harbhajan Singh Sandhu out of a car and shot him dead near the Sikh holy city of Amritsar.

He was the ninth Punjab candidate killed by militants who oppose the election for parliament and the state assembly on June 22. Under Indian law, polls are cancelled in a constituency in which a candidate is killed.

The polls are being held in Punjab after the rest of India votes on May 20, 23 and 26 to allow security forces on election duty elsewhere to be deployed in a state where separatist violence has killed more than 2,100 people this year.

90 Indian troops said killed by Pakistan in Kashmir

ISLAMABAD (R) — The Pakistani army killed more than 90 Indian soldiers in retaliatory firing across a ceasefire line in the disputed Kashmir region early this month, Pakistani newspapers said Saturday.

But a Pakistani army spokesman said he did not know how many people died on the Indian side in artillery duels in the region's Keran sector.

He said officers from both sides had met to ease tensions and no serious incident had happened since.

The Pakistani newspaper reports quoted a local army commander in the area. If the casualty figure is correct, the clashes would have been the most serious between the two countries in recent years.

The mass-circulation daily Jang quoted the Pakistani commander as saying Friday his troops had completely destroyed a strategic Indian post used to shell civilians on the Pakistani side and foiled several attempts to rebuild it.

"The Pakistani army had to finally silence the guns on the Indian post (at Bugna) in retaliation to Indian army's indiscriminate firing," PPI news agency quoted the commander as saying.

He said his troops would not allow the post to be rebuilt so that the road between Muzaffarabad, capital of Pakistan-ruled Azad (Free) Kashmir, and the border town of Kail could remain open.

The Bugna post could be seen from the Pakistani side of the ceasefire line, the Jang said. Two other Indian posts in the area were about 80 per cent destroyed.

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Moderate Congress Party wins Nepal elections

KATHMANDU (R) — The moderate Nepali Congress has won Nepal's first multi-party elections in 32 years. Chief Election Commissioner Surya Prasad Shrestha said Saturday.

With eight results remaining, Congress had won 104 seats in the 203-seat House of Representatives, he told Reuters.

Running a strong second was the United Marxist-Leninist (UML) Party with 68 seats. Potential UML allies on the left won 13 seats and together they appear set to form a powerful opposition.

"His majesty the king has been officially informed about the majority received by the Nepali Congress," Shrestha said.

King Birendra, traditionally revered as the reincarnation of a Hindu god, yielded to sometimes bloody pro-democracy protests just over a year ago and gave up his absolute powers, promising open elections to replace the partyless system then in place.

He is likely to call on Girija Prasad Koirala, a hardline anti-Communist from a prominent dissident family who once worked in a jute mill when political parties were illegal, to form a government.

Prime Minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, the Congress leader who headed an interim coalition government with the Communists after Birendra's liberalisation, was embarrassingly lost by a narrow margin to a UML leader in Kathmandu.

Two monarchist parties, formed by powerful figures in the partyless system and both called the National Democratic Party, were virtually wiped out. They won a total of four seats.

Parliament is to meet for the first time Tuesday, by when the last results should be known from remote mountain constituencies where people often walked for several hours to vote.

Congress is likely to elect Koirala as its parliamentary leader and Birendra is expected to summon him to the palace and ask him to form a government.

Koirala is the younger brother of the late Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala, who led Congress to power in the last multi-party elections in 1959.

Birendra's father, King Mahendra, staged a palace coup in 1960, threw B.P. Koirala into jail and made political parties illegal.

Mahendra and his son then ruled Nepal through a system of elected, partyless councils until Congress and the Communists launched a campaign for Western-style parliamentary democracy early last year.

The tasks before the new government will be formidable.

Nepal ranks among the world's 10 poorest countries and depends largely on foreign aid which senior ministers in the interim government admitted frankly often went astray.

The landlocked Himalayan nation must also negotiate a new trade and transit treaty with giant southern neighbour India.

U.S. aid flowing again to Cambodia

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. aid is beginning to flow again into rebel-held Cambodian border areas, U.S. officials said Friday. But more help awaits a report on how to assist other parts of the Communist-ruled country.

State Department officials testifying at a congressional hearing said the \$20 million in annual U.S. aid is "a pittance" when compared to the needs of the war-torn country.

President George Bush is asking for \$25 million to help Cambodians in the next fiscal year, including \$5 million to assist children through United Nations and private aid programmes.

Release of \$13 million in previously approved aid has been held up pending a report from a government team sent to Cambodia to look into how aid can best be used to help people in all parts of the country. The report is expected within a few weeks.

All U.S. aid to Cambodia had been stopped for several months amid allegations that some of it was going to the Khmer Rouge. That Communist group's repressive rule in the late 1970s resulted in the deaths of more than 1 million people in executions, civil unrest and famine.

U.S. Aid for International Development (AID) officials said their assistance is closely monitored and deny that any of it leaked to the Khmer Rouge resistance.

Other non-Communist rebel groups have complained that the cutoff of aid has increased the suffering of people in the border area, bringing the threat of starvation and disease.

Much of previous aid had gone to the non-Communist guerrillas. Congress and the Bush administration are trying to work out how to benefit needy civilians without sending funds to either the government or the rebels.

At the same time, U.S. officials are working for a United Nations supervised peace in the South East Asian country.

Aid has authorised release of \$7 million to buy medicine, school supplies and tools for people in rebel-held areas.

In addition, the money fund training programmes to give rebels community development skills, said Henrietta Holman Fore, assistant administrator of Aid's Asian Bureau.

Canada to toughen already strict gun control

TORONTO (AP) — Facing a rise in violent crime and growing public support for action, Justice Minister Kim Campbell is preparing another attempt to strengthen the nation's already strict gun-control laws.

Ms. Campbell's first bid to change the 1978 gun codes was diverted to a House of Commons committee last year after hunters, marksmen and others protested to Conservative parliament members, many from the rural west. The measure died with the end of the parliamentary session.

But a recent nationwide poll indicates 79 per cent of Canadians think gun control should be tightened.

The climate parallels that in the United States, where most Americans favour gun control but Congress has been heavily lobbied by the National Rifle Association to defeat restrictive legislation. In a signal of change last week, the lower house of Congress approved the so-called Brady Bill, which requires a seven-day waiting period to buy a firearm.

The bill was named after James Brady, former President Ronald Reagan's press secretary, who was shot in the head and left disabled in the 1981 attempt on Reagan's life.

The Canadian government is considering proposing a 28-day

waiting period and a ban on automatic weapons and sub-machine guns, among other measures.

The new Canadian law, which Ms. Campbell can file at any time, will likely pass if it comes up in the House of Commons, where Conservatives hold 159 of the 295 seats.

"It's just a matter of finalising the proposals," Rick Mosley, the Justice Ministry's senior general counsel for criminal law policy, said Thursday.

Compared with its southern neighbour, the crime problem in this nation of 26 million people is dwarfed.

There were about 23,600 murders in the United States last year, an average of 65 a day, according to FBI figures.

In Canada, there were 637 homicides last year, down 20 from 657 in 1989. In Metropolitan Toronto, which has a population of about 3.5 million, there were 55 homicides in 1990, including six by handguns, three by "other guns." Five people were killed by rocks.

But handgun-related offenses rose from 1,093 in 1988 to 1,820 in 1990; armed robberies were up from 337 to 648, and assaults with a weapon increased from 43 to 62.

"Compared with the United

States, the situation is night and day," said Mosley.

"In the U.S., handgun homicides are a serious problem. They are much less so here," he added.

"Ever since we adopted the gun control programme in 1978 there has been a steady decline in total number of firearms homicides as well as handgun homicides."

Handguns in Canada already are under very heavy control. It is difficult to get a permit and even harder to transport it anywhere. For example, a special permit is needed just to carry a handgun from the shop to the police station to register it.

But under the present law, anybody 16 older can buy a gun if he obtains a certificate, unless a police check reveals a criminal or violent record.

The parliamentary committee studying the gun-control measure issued its report earlier this year and a number of its proposals are said to be under consideration by the Justice Ministry.

The committee suggested a raise in the certificate fee from \$10 to \$50 and requirement that applicants provide two personal references, a photograph and wait 28 days to allow police investigation.

It also proposed banning all automatic weapons except for police or military use. Also out-

lawed would be semi-automatic assault weapons, such as AK-47s and Uzis. Magazines would be limited to five-rounds for rifles and shotguns and 10 rounds for handguns.

Concern about these weapons jumped when Marc Lepine used an assault rifle and two 30-round magazines in his attack at Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique in which he killed 14 women in December 1989.

The committee also called for requiring arms certificate applicants to pass a test on the safe handling of weapons.

Wendy Cukier, president of the Coalition for Gun Control, called a news conference Wednesday to complain that legislative action was not being taken fast enough.

"It is not clear to us that there is unanimity in cabinet with respect to tougher gun control legislation," she said. "We are not persuaded we are getting legislation in short order."

Tougher legislation is also backed by most law enforcement groups.

"Our position has been fairly consistent that anything to further strengthen gun control we are very much in support of," said Fred Schultz, executive director of the Canadian Association of Police Chiefs.

15 die in Mexico jail battle

MATAMOROS, Mexico (AP) — The Mexican army was deployed around a state jail where at least 15 inmates were killed Friday night in a turf battle between drug smugglers, a south Texas sheriff said.

The army "surrounded the perimeter of the jail," Cameron County Sheriff Alex Perez said across the border in Brownsville, Texas. "Mexican police say everything's calm. They have not gone inside the jail yet."

Perez had said in an earlier telephone interview that "I believe the army has taken the jail," but he later denied it.

The Excelsior News Agency in Mexico said at least 13 people were killed in what it described as a shootout between two gangs of prisoners armed with everything from machine guns to knives.

It said bodies littered the entrance to the Tamaulipas State Jail, called El Cerro, after the riot that

started around 7:30 p.m. (1130 GMT).

Raul Olmedo, a group captain with the State Judicial Police in Mexico City, confirmed that it was a battle between inmates provoked by an assassination attempt.

One section of the prison had been burned but the fire was out, Olmedo said.

In Texas, Cameron County officials stationed police on both international bridges to keep possible escapees from entering the United States, said Sheriff's Lt. S.R. Garcia. Matamoros is next to the U.S.-Mexico border 750 kilometres northeast of Mexico City.

"The Federal Judicial Commander has been in touch with us and so far they've got about 15 to 17 dead inmates," Garcia said. Mexican Judicial Police had removed some of the bodies from the prison, he said.

